

Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

MARCH-APRIL 2007

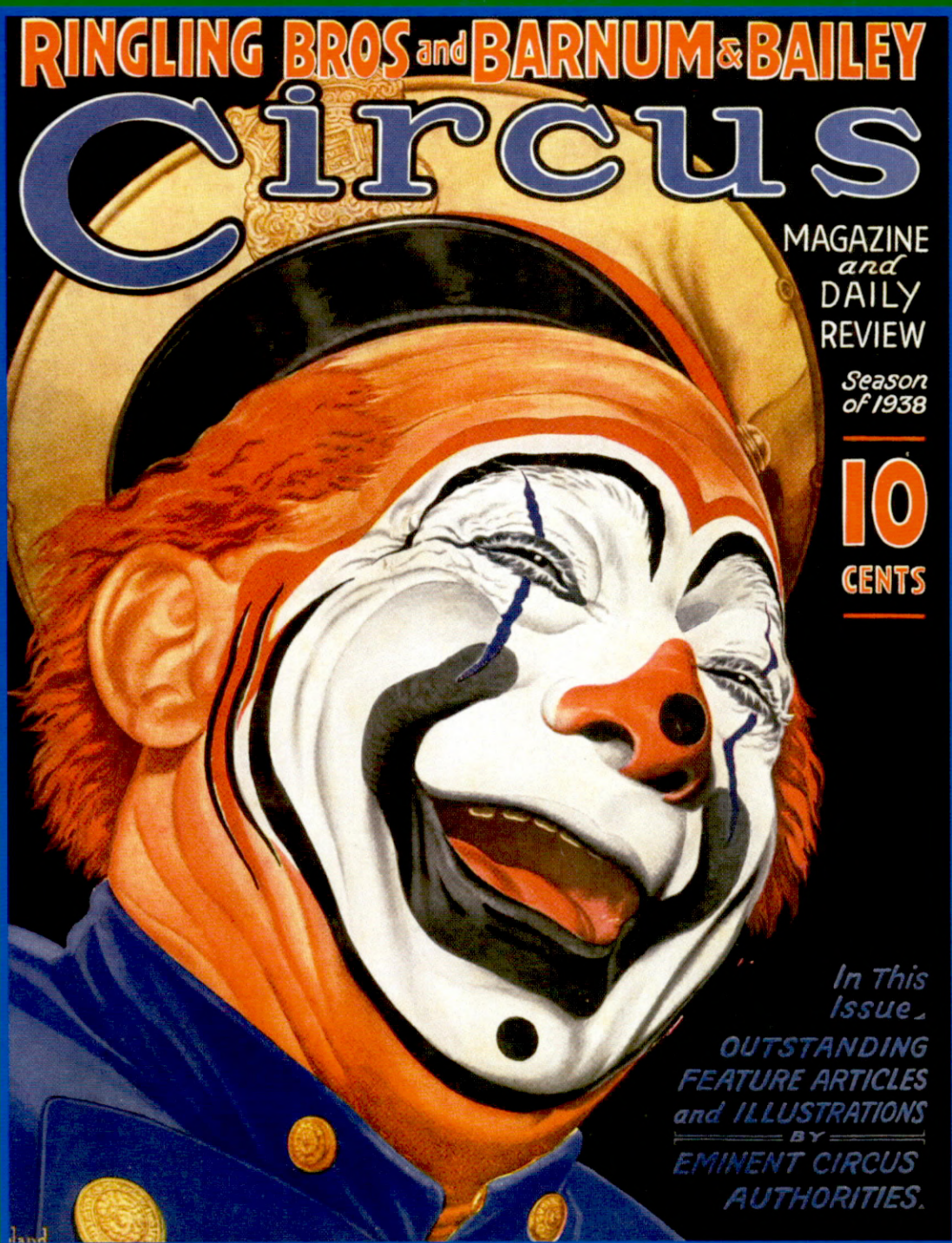
RINGLING BROS and BARNUM & BAILEY

Circus

MAGAZINE
and
DAILY
REVIEW

Season
of 1938

10
CENTS



*In This
Issue,*

OUTSTANDING
FEATURE ARTICLES
and ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
EMINENT CIRCUS
AUTHORITIES.

BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Vol. 51. No. 2

FRED D. PFENING, JR.

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

MARCH-APRIL 2007

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Bandwagon, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society, Inc. (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005-4968), is published bi-monthly by the Circus Historical Society, Inc., 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691. Periodicals Postage Paid at Columbus, OH. Postmaster: Send address changes to Bandwagon, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691.

Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$100, half page \$60, quarter page \$35. Minimum ad \$25.

Bandwagon, new membership and subscription rate: \$40.00 per year in the United States; \$44.00 per year in Canada and outside United States. Single copies \$4.00 plus \$2 postage. Please direct all concerns regarding address changes and lack of delivery to the editor. Membership application forms can be found on the CHS web site <http://circushistory.org>.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. <http://circushistory.org>. Robert F. Sabia, President, 3100 Parkside La., Williamsburg, VA 23185. Judith Griffin, Vice President, 519 N. Union St., Appleton, WI 54911-5031. Alan Campbell, Secretary-Treasurer, 600 Kings Peak Dr., Alpharetta, GA 30022-7844.

Trustees: Alan Campbell, 600 Kings Peak Dr., Alpharetta, GA 30022-7844. Judith Griffin, 519 N. Union St., Appleton, WI 54911-5031. Fred Dahlinger, Jr., 451 Roblee Rd., Baraboo, WI 53913; John McConnell, 1 Skyline Dr., Morristown, NJ 07960; Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221; Fred D. Pfening III, 1075 W. Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212; John F. Polacek, 5980 Lannoo, Detroit, MI 48236; Richard J. Reynolds III, 1186 Warrenhall Lane N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319; Robert F. Sabia, 3100 Parkside La., Williamsburg, VA 23185; Al Stencell, 15 Lark St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4L-3M5. Trustee Emeritus: Stuart L. Thayer.

THE FRONT COVER

The 1938 Ringling-Barnum Circus program on the cover is classic Roland Butler.

Butler began his circus career in 1921 when he designed a letterhead for Sparks Circus. He then became General Press Representative for the show. He designed Sparks couriers, lithographs and newspaper ads, all in his distinctive style.

In 1930 Butler joined Ringling-Barnum after John Ringling purchased the American Circus Corporation.

Butler was in his prime in the 1930s, concocting names like Ubangis and Giraffe-Necked Women. His drawings of those people and of Gargantua are among his best work.

After his retirement in 1944 from Ringling he designed letterheads and posters for King Bros., Clyde Beatty, Cristiani-Wallace, Wallace Bros.; Leonard Bros., Beers-Barnes; Woodcock's elephants and the Circus Historical Society.

The king of modern day circus press agents died on October 20, 1961.

BACK COVER

This 1899 Buffalo Bill Wild West die-cut courier was distributed by the thousands.

Nate Salsbury was pictured along with Buffalo Bill Cody on the back cover.

Annie Oakley, Johnny Baker, Indians, The Battle of San Juan Hill and Russian Cossacks were pictured inside.

NEW MEMBERS

Philip J. Thorick 4443
911 River Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13901-1462

David Powell 4444
5703 Dover Rd. #B
Apple Creek, OH 44606-9400

Robert J. Murphy 4445
93 Blumenthal St.
Murphy, SC 28906-2950

BANDWAGON

BACK ISSUES

1966-Jan.-Feb.
1967-Nov.-Dec.
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Nov.-Dec.
1974-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-All available.
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.
1980-1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-2006-All available.
In addition to above many other issues are available going back to the 1950s. If you are in need of early issues write to the Editor. Price is \$4.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage for one issue. \$5.00 for more than one issue. Please select substitutes in case we are out of any of above.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES

2515 DORSET RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43221

Christopher G. Grieder 4446
312 Polar Circle
Arlington, NC 55307-2022

Vera Robinson 4447
3 Greentree Lane
Malvern, PA 19355-3015

Tim Torkildson 4448
P. O. Box 813
Hugo, OK 74743-0813

Ron Erday 4449
3915 Glen Oaks Manor Dr,
Sarasota, FL 34232-1039

REINSTATED

Ed Sheehan 3393
4119 Voorne St.
Sarasota, FL 34234-5551

DUES NOTICES MAILED

The 2007 dues and subscription notices have been mailed.

Please send your payment in the return envelope provided as soon as possible. Don't miss an issue of the *Bandwagon*.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please advise the editor when you move. The post office will not forward, copies are returned costing CHS \$1.65.



By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

As has often been the case in election years, 2006 proved to be bad business for the circus industry. Reports indicated it was the worst season in recent years. One show closed after a couple of months, but not for economic reasons. Another had the worst year in recent history. Other circus owners reported that they did not lose money, but did not register the grosses of recent years. Overall it was not a good year for sawdust operators.

With the Internet continuing to explode the circus presence grew. More circuses had web sites. Circus Vern and Circusnews.com continued to provide daily circus news.

But the real story was the increased number of circus blogs. Former elephant trainer Buckles Woodcock was the king of circus bloggers. His site drew a huge number of hits each day and became the fastest source of news for the industry. It was, in fact, almost the trade journal for the business. Many others had blogs, including Ben Trumble with daily Carson & Barnes reports, an online route book as it were. Others

Inside the Kelly-Miller big top. John Wells photo.

were Bill Strong, Pat Cashin's clown blog; Jim Peterson; John Turner; Raffele de Ritis from Italy; David Lewis Hammarstrom; Circus-folks.com; Murray Hill's Blog Spot; and James Maguire. Many of these

The finale of the Ringling-Barnum Blue unit. Peter Rosa photo.

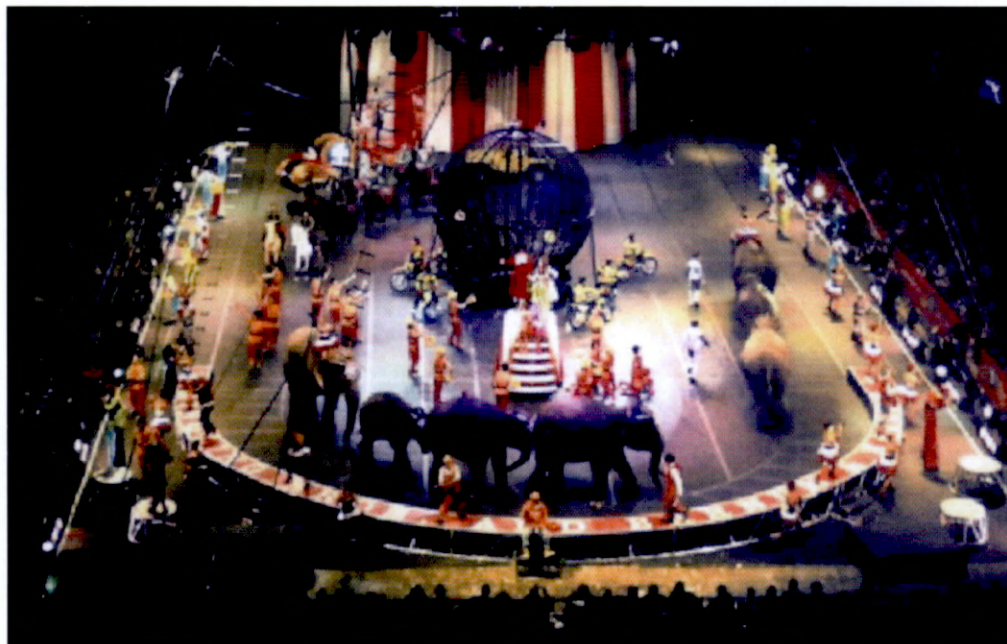
were listed under Links on the Woodcock blog.

At the end of 2005 the Feld organization announced that the new Blue unit would present an entirely new type of show in which 15 million dollars had been invested to provide an entirely new concept, the result of what the circus had learned by interviews with circus goers.

As a Ringling press release proclaimed, "In a bold move designed to create an entirely contemporary and interactive circus experience it assembled a team of television, film and stage veterans to redefine the Greatest Show on Earth. . . . The creative team—completely new to producing any type of circus production—is currently hard at work building the new 136th Edition of Ringling Bros. that is guaranteed to put audiences closer to the action than ever before.

"This all-new production is introducing the biggest changes Ringling Bros. has experienced in 50 years," said Kenneth Feld, CEO and producer of Ringling Bros. "Our single goal in rethinking the Greatest Show on Earth was to give families a more intimate, interactive and up-close experience."

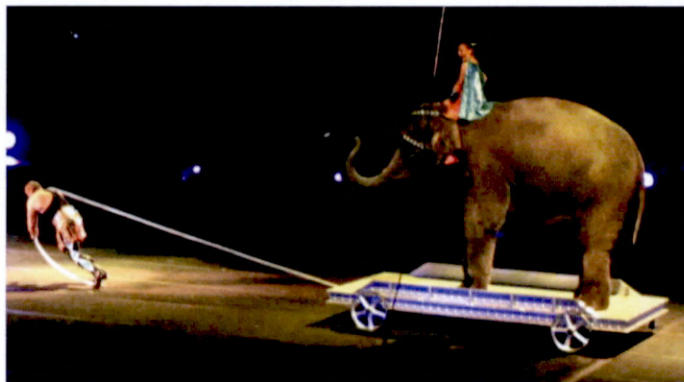
"Leading this fresh and dynamic team are Kenneth Feld and his daughter Nicole Feld, who, at 27 years old, has followed in her father





Kenneth and Nicole Feld. Feld Entertainment photo.

and grandfather's footsteps to become producer of Ringling Bros.



Herkules and his elephant. Fred Pfening photo.

and Barnum & Bailey. As a third-generation Feld producer Nicole is guiding the creative team in re-imagining what Ringling Bros. means to the modern American family."

Feld hired a high-powered group of people to put the show together. The brainstormers included Robert Brill, who staged a Broadway revival of *Cabaret*; Colleen Atwood, costume designer, whose film credits included *Chicago* and *Memories of a Geisha*, and children's author Bradley Zweig. The acts were linked together by director Shanda Sawyer.

The ringless arena was similar to an ice show layout. A 24-foot television screen highlighted close-up images of the performers. A story line

told of a family sharing their "Dreams in the Circus," in which the father became a ringmaster; the daughter, a showgirl; the son, part of a foot-juggling act; and the mother, a trapeze artist.

The Blue unit opened in Tampa, Florida on January 4, traveling on 59 cars. Not knowing what to expect the audience was surprised to find it was a circus *sans* rings. There was no wild animal, high wire, or flying trapeze act.

Jennifer Fuentes, an American Idol television show finalist, was the singing ringmistress who introduced the storyline. The Shenzhen troupe of 15 Chinese provided a hat juggling routine that included the son in the fantasy family. The Cossack Riders were next with dressage and equestrian drills. Herkules, brought over from the Gold Unit, pulled an elephant on a cart and caught a can-

non ball shot from a cannon. Madame Shamsheeva presented house cats, birds and dogs. The Chinese were back with a Yunnan

swing that included trapeze catches. The Cossacks returned as Roman riders that led in to a spec that closed the first half.

The second half opened with Gisela Rigelme's single trap act. She was the mom in the storyline. A standard elephant routine was next. The Chinese then came back with a risley and foot-juggling turn. Wellington Silva provided an aerial foot loop walking routine that finished with a mid-air jump to a trapeze. The final act was the Torres brothers on seven motorcycles in a globe. act. The show closed with the entire cast returning for a walkaround.

Newspaper reviews along the route were not kind to the new performance style. The show played the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island, March 14-19 and Madison Square Garden, March 23 to April 17.

The March 24 New York *Daily News* reported, "The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus is in town. Step right up and gaze at a sight never before witnessed by human eyes. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus is at Madison Square Garden with not three, not two, no, not even one single solitary ring!"

"Yes, gasp in amazement as the Greatest Show on Earth threatens to become the Lamest Show on Earth! Stripped of its rings, the circus is presented in an open space, framed on one end by a banked semi-circle. The new setting has all the charm of a

Vincenta Pages and her tigers. Jim Cole collection.



warehouse and tends to swallow the acts.

"Perhaps to counter this, a hanging 24-foot circular TV screen projects close ups of the performers. The camera work and picture quality are excellent, but doesn't this defeat the whole purpose of eliminating distractions?"

"Ringling Bros. gets into real trouble by overlaying a fantasy story line on the whole package. A 'family' of four is plucked from the crowd to live out their circus dreams, but it is immediately apparent they're all ringers. That leaves us with professionals portraying amateurs aspiring to be professionals!"

"Not all is lost. The unimpeded floor plan frees the Kassaev Cossacks to gallop about on horses. The Yunnan Flyers live up to their name. The swarming hornet's nest of seven motorcyclists buzzing inside the Globe of Death still amazes. And Madam Shamsheeva does the seemingly impossible: She gets kitty cats to obey her commands and interact peacefully with dogs and birds. Still, she's a slight successor to Gunther Gebel-Williams, who once tamed the big cats.

"But that was a different circus."

Other changes included the use of new style newspaper ads, that read, "Break out of your routine. And do something different." Another change was the content of the \$15 program. For the first time there was no listing of the acts. However the photographs of the acts were pictured in the order in which they appeared in the performance.

Kenneth and Nicole Feld continued the season holding tight to their original concept in the face of criticism, and tepid reviews. The performance was modified in October when Vincenta Pages's white tiger act was added to the performance in Cleveland. A bi-level car was sent from Florida to carry the tiger shifting cages on the train. This made the train the longest in the history of the post-big top circus, 60 cars.

Jorge Pages, Vincenta's father, was in Cleveland for the first performance on October 20. The cat act opened the second half of the show.

The steel arena was spotted just outside the back curtain under the video screen. Kenneth Feld arrived on the second day and had the arena moved to the center of the performing area and added more lighting.

The red unit opened January 5-16 in Miami, Florida. The show, featuring Bello Nock, was in its second and final year. The acts were the same as in 2005.

While the red show was in Corpus Christi, Texas on July 8 a fire broke out in one of the sleepers. It was quickly put out by the fire department. Investigators thought it was and electrical blaze caused by a Playstation.

The moving of the Red and Blue shows was more difficult and expensive. On occasion an indirect route was used due to some railroads being uncooperative in handling a show train.



The Flying Neves on the Gold unit. Feld Entertainment photo.

Circus and rail fan Bill Rhodes gave an example. Commenting on the Red show's closing in Ft. Worth on August 13 and move to Lexington for an August 17 opening, Rhodes notes, "The shortest route would be Union Pacific from Ft. Worth to Memphis, CSX from Memphis to Louisville and R. J. Corman from

Louisville to Lexington. This is about 975 miles. Instead, the show chose to go Ft. Worth to Kansas City on BNSF. Then to Decatur, Illinois; Muncie, Indiana; Cincinnati, Ohio to Lexington on Norfolk Southern, making the run about 1260 miles. Rail fans noted that UP does not give priority to extra traffic such as circuses or Amtrak. Revenue freight had first priority and oddball traffic such as circus trains were side tracked to move at slack times. A recent letter to *Trains* magazine suggested CSX had a similar policy. The longer route may have been the fastest in terms of time.

"The show train arrived at the Corman interchange only two hours late with the BNSF locomotives still on it. Corman moved the train about 1/4 mile to the yard and parked the sections. For this the show was reportedly billed \$55,000. The fee included five days storage and return to a connecting road."

The Ringling-Barnum Gold Unit opened in January. Tony Stevens was director and choreographer. He came from a Broadway background. The new production was titled "An Upside-Down World."

The pre-show consisted of Jon Weiss and Lilian Escobar mingling with the audience and inviting them to go backstage to see the elephants and horses.

The program included Liliana Escobar singing the National Anthem; Sylvia Zerbini with her combined aerial lyre and liberty horses; the Los Scolas, high wire act; Gail Mirabella, frisbee catching dogs; Tom Dougherty, clown; Monica Neves, Christine Zerbini and Charteny Neves, chiffon and Spanish web; clown Mitch Fredes, aerial parody; the Ikar troupe, rope jumping; Jump, a spec with Lilian Escobar and entire cast. Intermission. The Flying Neves, trapeze; clown Tom Dougherty; Alex Petrov and Vicki Zsilak, upside-down aerial number; Sebastian Sankar and son, contortion and hand balancing; Billy Morris and Libby Garcia, elephant act, with Ringling ele-

phants Gunther and Angelica. (later replaced by Anthony Thomas with three Tarzan Zerbini elephants and finally Patty Zerbini's large tusker). The finale featured Liliana Escobar and entire cast.

The *Houston Chronicle* published an article early in January about Sister Bernard Overkamp and Sister Dorothy Fabritze traveling with Ringling. The two Catholic nuns worked on the show, provided First Communion and baptized children. They had been with Circus Chimera before going to Ringling.

Nicole Lauren Feld and Kyle Strauss were married on June 3, 2006.

The Venice, Florida, *Gondolier* reported on February 3 that Kenneth Feld had authorized a local representative to meet with community leaders and set the stage for a round of public presentations he would make about returning to the Sarasota area. The article said, "While the timing of Feld's appearances may be coincidental, they could fit neatly into deliberations about a proposed Sarasota County Fairgrounds relocation and Roberts Arena replacement that have been spurred on by a developer's recent offer.

"Last week, Orlando businessman Christopher C. Cogan offered to pay the Sarasota County Agricultural and Fair Association \$47.4 million and provide 175 acres along Interstate 75 near Palmer Ranch in return for the 68-acre fairgrounds site on Fruitville Road.

"What Mr. Feld wants is the right facility configured to accommodate a circus. It has to include rigging, elephant doors, a floor piped and plumbed for ice shows, and an arena capable of seating 5,000 to 6,000 people for premieres and shows."

Ringling-Barnum committed \$135,000 to the Smithsonian's National Zoo to fund research for the endangered Asian elephant species. In May a female elephant was born at the



Mrs. George Harrison, Guy Laliberte and Yoko Ono at the opening night of LOVE. Cirque du Soleil photo.

Ringling-Barnum Elephant Conservation Center, the 20th elephant born there. On May 9 it was announced that Feld Entertainment sold its headquarters building in Vienna, Virginia to America's Capital Partners for about \$20.3 million. The Feld organization then leased back the building.

There seemed no end to Cirque du Soleil's growth. Delirium, its new arena show, opened in Montreal on January 26. The indoor exhibition featured music from past touring units. The 176-foot long by 20-foot wide stage was six feet high. Performers appeared from trap doors in the stage.

Throughout the show a man hanging from a track high above the stage floated in and out of the acts.

The Sr. Pepper group in LOVE. Jae C. Hong photo.



Giant projections appeared on both sides of the stage.

Most of the performance was standard Soleil. However, a few outstanding circus acts were presented near the end of the show. One and two day stands were booked in 100 cities.

The Cirque du Soleil LOVE show celebrated the Beatles. The show was born out of a personal friendship between the late George Harrison and Cirque founder Guy Laliberte. In a June 23 *Newsweek* interview Harrison's widow, Olivia, told how it all started, "The world may seize upon the June 30 opening of the Cirque du Soleil-Beatles collaboration 'Love' in Las Vegas as a chance to re-examine the Beatles legacy in all its glory and gossip, but for George Harrison's widow, it will be a much more personal event. The \$150 million surrealist spectacle, scored from an extensive remix of newly digitized Fab Four recordings, was Harrison's last great idea, so seeing it through has been a bitter-sweet mission for Olivia since his death in 2001.

"George and Guy met in the 1990s on the Formula One circuit. Guy hosts a party after the Montreal Grand Prix, so George went. George came home and said, 'You know, there was a man and a woman sitting in a lake. She had a tuxedo on and he had a ball gown on and they sat at a table all night long having a candlelit dinner with water up to their waist. There were people in feather costumes swinging in the trees like birds.' This really was right up George's alley. Guy was a visionary and so was George. They had a lot of excited conversations. George instigated a meeting with Paul, George, Yoko, Ringo and Guy. Everyone wanted to have fun, be creative and have someone else be the vehicle for that."

Creating the Beatles show for Las Vegas was a great challenge for Soleil. All its past shows used specially written music to fit the acts. In this case the acts were created to fit the

music. An army of technicians, costume artists and designers spent months assembling the mammoth production.

Sixty performers interpreted the spirit of the Beatles. Using master tapes Sir George Martin and his son Giles arranged the musical score, selecting songs from the entire Beatles archives.

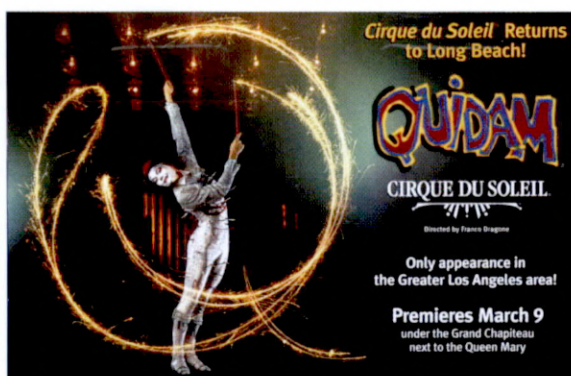
The custom-built theater at the Mirage featured 360 degree seating with panoramic video projections and surrounding sound. The theater seated 2,000 and the show was given twice a night.

A gala premier took place on June 30. A bevy of show business celebrities walked the red carpet leading to the Mirage Theater. The guests included Ringo Star, Yoko Ono, Paul McCartney, Siegfried and Roy, Billy Crystal, Tony Bennett, Eddie Murphy and Woody Harrelson, among others. It was a smash from the start, filling both shows every night. Tickets were priced from \$69 to \$150.

LOVE was produced and conceived by Guy Laliberte; director and writer Dominic Champagne; director of creation Gilles Ste-Croix; costume designer Philippe Gullotel; lighting designer Yves Aucoin; choreographers Hansel Cereza and David St-Pierre; and prop designer Patricia Ruel.

On May 18 Cirque entered into an exclusive arrangement with Elvis Presley Enterprises for the creation of a show based on Presley and his music. Laliberte stated at the announcement, "It clearly demon-

The Cirque Niagara big top. Internet photo.



Post card used to advertise Cirque's Quidam opening in Los Angeles. Jerry Cash collection.

strates our intention to pursue the diversification of our artistic content through different live productions."

The parties agreed to open at least one touring show in Europe and Asia. Beginning in 2009 at least one Elvis Presley Project was to open in each of the next six years. No Las Vegas shows were included in the plan.

Quidam, an under canvas show, returned to the United States to join Varekai and Corteo. In August Corteo and Quidam were in the United States. Saltimbanco in Brazil, Delirium in Germany and Alegria in Belgium. Varekai was later in Australia.

On November 21 Soleil announced that it had signed a four-year deal with Madison Square Garden Entertainment to create a show every winter in the 5,000-seat theater in the Garden.

It was to be a family-oriented show running for 10 weeks beginning in 2007. Laliberte said, "It's a chance to expand our repertoire

by creating a family show, and the extended run will bring us into close contact with nearly a million New Yorkers."

The impact of Soleil's presence in Manhattan on Ringling-Barnum in the spring and Big Apple in December remains to be seen.

The Canadian Province of Quebec government provided startup money for a number of circuses in Montreal. In 2006 Ontario's Niagara Parks Commission and Cirque Niagara combined to present a spectacular new attraction. The Park Commission provided a sizeable amount of money to get the project off the ground.

The show, titled Avaia, was brought from Russia. It created by Mairbek Kantemirov and his cousin Oleg Kantemirov was artistic director. Kantemirov worked for the Moscow Circus before joining Cirque du Soleil. He also operated a circus school in Toronto. The Kantemirov family had been circus performers in Russia since 1971.



Billboard used by Big Apple in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

There were 50 acrobats and riders and nineteen horses in the performance. The show used Jorge Barreda's big top and seats. The tent was heated and air-conditioned. The show opened on May 20, 2006 at Rapidsview Park. The performance included vertical bars, trampoline, dressage riders, clowns, contortionists, fast track riders, dancers and aerial straps. On July 16 a Toronto newspaper reported 60,000 people had seen the show since the opening. The season closed on October 8.

The 2006 Big Apple Circus was



The UniverSoul Circus in Inglewood, California in November. Jerry Cash photo.

called Grandma Goes to Hollywood. It was conceived by Barry Lubin and directed by Steve Smith. Rob Slowik conducted an eight-person band. Kathy Halenda sang throughout the show. The program included clown Barry Lubin; the Olate family, dogs; clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto; Yasmine Smart, horses; the Anhui troupe, teeterboard; Elena and her gentlemen, juggling; Christian Atayde Stoinev, hand standing; Willer Nicolodi, ventriloquist; Sergey Akimov, strap act; Andrey Mantchev, hand balancing and the Garamov troupe, flying trapeze.

Big Apple opened its summer season at Stone Mountain Park in Atlanta, Georgia on February 11. The season closed in Hanover, New Hampshire July 25. A new Italian big top was raised in Charlestown, Rhode Island. For the first time in many years the show ventured to the Midwest, playing Columbus, June 16-24. The engagement was spon-

Circus Flora ad used in Nantucket in 2006.



sored by a local arts organization. The stand was disappointing and it is doubtful that the show will play Columbus in the foreseeable future.

The New York Post of December 23 reported Coney Island officials had contacted Big Apple about playing the Astroland Amusement Park site. It stated that it would not be a relocation of the show from Lincoln Center where the show was committed for the foreseeable future.

Cedric Walker's UniverSoul Circus toured only one unit in 2006. Admission was \$10 to \$26. The 14th season opened in Savannah, Georgia on February 6. The show was titled "The Magic of Soul," which blended urban culture with circus turns. The circus played Jacksonville, Florida starting March 8, following two weeks in Atlanta.

Tony Tone was ringmaster. His sidekick Zeke returned to the show. The performance opened with Soul On Ice, an ice skating act presented on a synthetic surface not affected by weather. A Caribbean Festival spec followed, featuring a limbo queen and four stilt walkers; the Ethiopian Dream Team, body and foot juggling; the Gabonese troupe, high wire act and teeterboard with jumps over elephants; the Willy family, motorcycle globe; Onionhead, clown; Chinese vase juggling; Terry Leportier's lions presented by Monique; the China Soul Daredevils, flying tra-

peze; Veronica Williams, chiffon act; Standing in Motion, statue act and Tyrone Taylor with three Carson & Barnes elephants.

The Circus Arts Foundation of Missouri was the non-profit parent of Circus Flora. The show played Charleston, South Carolina. May 25-30 with a live band.

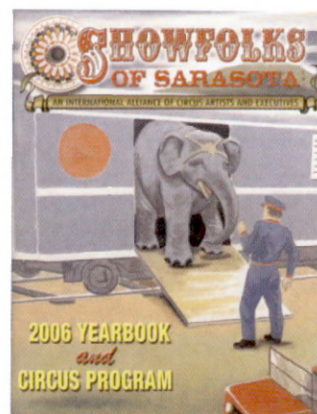
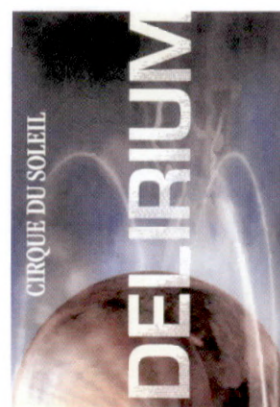
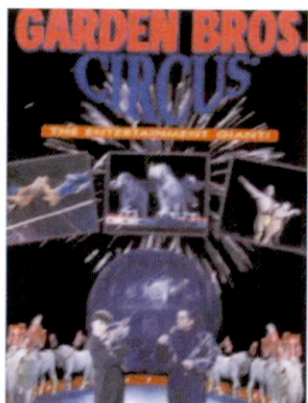
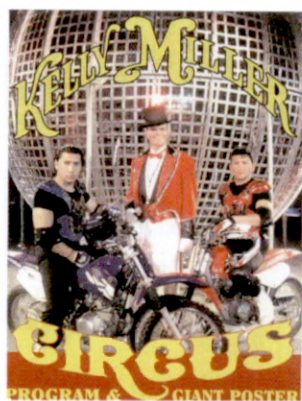
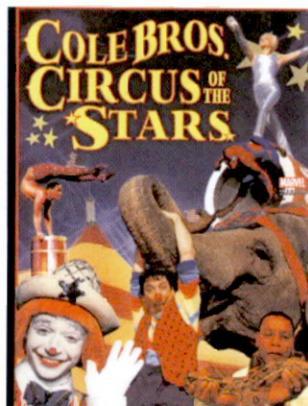
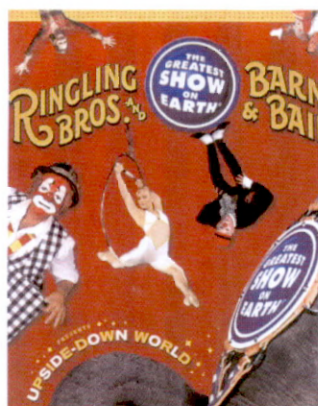
When the troupe exhibited in St. Louis from June 9-25, the performance was entitled "Homage." The 65-member company included Aurelia Wallenda, high wire, cloud swing, and flying trapeze; Tino Wallenda's high wire recreating the famous



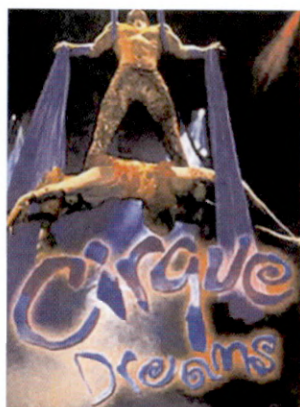
Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis. Circus Sarasota photo.

seven person pyramid; Yo-Yo, juggler; clown Giovanni Zoppe; Katja Shumann, liberty horses; the St. Louis Arches; the Ianna Spirit Riders; Olisso and Gino Zoppe, riding act; Sasha Alexandre Nevidonski, aerial and equestrian act; and Markov's dogs. Flora played Nantucket, Massachusetts, July 28-30.

Pedro Reis and Dolly Jacobs opened their Circus Sarasota under a big top on February 2 and continued through February 26 at the Sarasota Fair Grounds. The edition was titled "Circus of Dreams." Cliff Roles was ringmaster. The performance included Crazy Wilson, space wheel; the Svensons, riding act; Benito Aguilar, juggling; clowns Dick Monday and Slappy; Damien Boudreau and Genevieve Cliché, hand balancing; Vladimir and Olga Smivnov, quick change act; David



2006 PROGRAMS





The elephants were back on Cole Bros. in 2006. Paul Gutheil photo.

Rosaire, dog act; Dolly Jacobs, aerialist; Danny Daniel and Edina, rola bola and the Wallenda high wire act. In September Jim Ragana joined the show as general manager.

John and Brigitte Pugh opened their Cole Bros. Circus of the Stars in Deland, Florida, the winter quarters, March 18-19. The show continued its one ring format. Christopher Connors and Ted McRae were ringmasters. The Chinese Qiphaer acrobat troupe was denied entrance by the United States Immigration Service. The Mombasa Acrobats from Kenya were quickly hired to fill the gap.

The acts included Svetlana Golobolva, contortionist and chiffon; Skyscraper Super Cycle, motorcycle trapeze act; Spiderman; Blaze Birge and David Jones, double trap act; Craig Rogers, dog act; Dani Stoianov, hair hang; Ted McRae, snakes and liberty ponies; Tetyana Synoviyat, cannon act; clown Elmo Gibb; David Soles, single trap and Unis brothers, musical clowns.

The Wilmington, North Carolina *Star News* published an interesting

article about John Pugh on April 7. Quoting Pugh, it said, "It's a tough business. There's the competition from other entertainment, the hassle of government permits, not to mention the rising cost of fuel and insurance. Today's circus hardly compares with the glamorous days of the 1950s, when circuses were bigger and more popular. You can't jack up the prices just because the gasoline pries go through the roof. Money comes from ticket sales, which range from \$10 to \$15, and concession sales. So you need to make over \$200,000 a week, just to break even."

On May 3-4 the show was in Hagerstown, Maryland. By then Willie Davenport, aka William Jacobs, had joined with a third elephant. The three elephants were owned by Gopher Davenport, his father. The show paraded in Pittsfield, Massachusetts on July 4.

A near blow down occurred in Greenport, Long Island on July 28. After the weatherman called for severe thunderstorms manager Pugh added additional stakes to the big top and additional trucks were spot-

The four center pole big top on Carson & Barnes. Gary Hill photo.

ted near by. The five o'clock show was cancelled and refunds were offered. Fortunately the storms passed to the north of the show lot. On August 23 the circus went indoors to play the Pennsylvania National Guard Armory in North Philadelphia.

Cole and L. E. Barnes and Bailey Circus day and dated in Mobile, Alabama on October 6. Both enjoyed good business. In Biloxi, Mississippi early in the morning of October 18 the 48-foot cookhouse semi-trailer caught fire. The fire department was called when it became too much for show employees to put out the blaze. The show had two sold out performances that day.

The 70th anniversary edition of Carson and Barnes Circus opened in Arlington, Texas, March 19. Nine semi-trailers were cut from the show over the winter. One water truck was dropped, as was the towing and tire truck. The snake show trailer was reworked into a ticket booth and snack bar. A smaller 240-foot by 120 foot, four-pole, three ring big top was used, seating 2,000. There was a new performers' tent at the backdoor.

A redesigned office-ticket semi-trailer was on the midway. Another change was a pie car cookhouse. Randy Peterson was the new elephant boss. The wild animal act was cut from the show. Aaron Broderick was the new ringmaster. The opening number was Be A Clown, with all the performers enacting an old-time clown walkaround. It was followed by a three-ring display with an upside down foot walk, an aerial lyre and an aerial loop-to-loop act. Manny and Maria, mid-air motorcross; Los Brasilerinhos, samba dancing; two space wheels; a Red, White and Blue aerial number with the De Paula Duo; the Cardenas brothers, the Cavallini Duo and Indiana Pintado,



balance acts; Randy Peterson with elephants; the Quina family, high wire act; and the Flying Fernandes, flying trapeze were among the actors.

The season closed with indoor shows in Tulsa; Little Rock, Wichita, and Mesquite, Texas. Additional acts were booked for the large city dates. The company employed around 150 people, forty of them performers. In past years there had been about 250 with the show. In August Harry "Hashi" Dubsky, Jr. joined Carson & Barnes as the mail-out promoter. He later took over the advance department. Carson and Barnes elephants also appeared with UniverSoul, Hanneford, Kelly-Miller, Carden, Bailey Bros., and the Evansville, Indiana Shrine Circus.

During the season Ben Trumble's blog told of activities on the show, similar to a route book. Here is quote dated December 1, "Winter weather stretches from Texas to Pennsylvania today. It is I suppose fitting then that the Carson & Barnes Circus ends its 2006 season today, tomorrow, and Sunday with arena shows in Mesquite, Texas. Show times are at 4:30 and 7:30. On Saturday show times are at 2:30, 4:30. Sunday's performances are at 1:30 and 4:30 p.m.

"2006 marked the 70th consecutive season since Obert Miller, a dog and pony show trainer, and his sons Kelly and D. R. started a circus that

became Carson & Barnes. It has in this 70th season been a honor and a pleasure to come to your town. Since March we have visited Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

"Our families entertained your families. And next season we will do it again."

Jim Judkins's Circus Chimera opened in Brownsville, Texas on February 2 to a sold out crowd. Roy Ordaz was general manager and ringmaster. A press release said, "Circus Chimera is a narrative circus—it does not include animals in the show—and tells a story through the acts, in this case, 'Alice in Wonderland.'

"The magic begins as the classic characters emerge from the pages of a book in a dance reminiscent of a Balinese shadow play.

"Alice, Ekaterina Bazarova, recreates the beloved heroine's fall down the well with grace and fluidity on the aerial lyre while acrobats from far-off Russia and China twirl behind her. Two beautiful gymnasts enact the battle of Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. Enter the clown, renowned Russian master of mirth Genia Naidenkin.

"Next to appear is French sensation Berengere with hoops in a dazzling display of rhythmic gymnastics.

Then it is time for Peruvian daredevil Fridman Torales as the Mad Hatter.

"Act one concludes with an acrobatic adagio, a breathtaking Chinese Pole routine by two of the world-famous Acro Star Troupe's most agile performers.

"Leading off the second half

of the show, Torales as the Cheshire Cat performs the classic Pase de la Muerte (up-side-down walk), inspired by the tope bridges stretching across treacherous abysses in his native Andres while Alice's seismic shifts are beautifully symbolized by Ekaterina Bazarova's award-winning contortion routine."

Bazarova, who played the title character, was a former Russian Olympic gymnast turned contortionist. Torales, the Mad Hatter and the Cheshire Cat, also presented a rola bola act. The Acro Star Troupe of Chinese presented an acrobatic act. Ben Allen and Travis Beem were clowns.

During the first month of the season in the McAllen, Texas area, the Naidenkin Russian family joined the show with a clown act, hula hoops and an aerial duo act. They replaced a group of Kenyan acrobats. In all, there were 22 performers. Business was up the first half of the season, and down the second half.

The New Circus Vargas opened in Apple Valley, California on April 19. After being off the road for two years the circus was brought back to life by Nelson and Katya Quiroga, owners of Tabares Entertainment, Inc. The show was in perfect condition after being stored in the desert. Marketing to the Latino community, all announcements were made in English and Spanish.

Victorio Arara was performance director. The acts included the Romero troupe, Russian swing and teeterboard; the Tabares family, trampoline, flying act; Vladimir's dogs and cats; Astilla Jr.'s dogs; Marinellis, trampoline; clowns Coco Kramer and company; Katya and Patricia, aerial ballet and Celeste, aerial perch.

David Rawls' Kelly-Miller Circus opened in Frisco, Texas, March 30-31. Alan Thompson was bandleader. Justin Loomis was ringmaster. The performance included the Portugal family, space wheel; clown Tony; Alex Chimal, juggler and low wire act; Laura Herriott, mixed animal review; the Chimal family, Russian swing and motorcycle globe; Mai Deyanira, hula hoops; the Walter Trio, aerial strap act; Joe and Nati



Raising the Chimera big top. Jerry Cash photo.

Frisco, elephants and Miss Carmen, trapeze.

The route took the show east, playing Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Kansas. The Circus Fans Association convention attendees saw the show in Elk Grove Village, Illinois on September 7.

It was rumored that the show would close early; however, it completed the booked dates. Following the close of the season David Rawls announced the show was for sale.



David Rawls and John Ringling North II. Beverly Royal photo.

In December John Ringling North II, son of Henry Ringling North, and an Irish citizen, bought the circus, stating that it would tour in 2007 with Jim Royal as manager. It was to be titled "John Ringling North II presents the Kelly-Miller Circus." The purchase did not include the elephants that had been on lease from Carson & Barnes since the show's inception. Part of the deal called for Rawls to book the route in 2007.

Johnny Walker's circus opened a series of under-canvas Florida dates on January 28 in Key West and closed in Oldsmar on February 19. Dallas Rosaire-Zoppe was ring mistress. The acts included Jason Walker, juggler; Sashi Twarogowski, high school horse; Ayak brothers, double trap acrobatics; Mr. Rodnet, silk act; and the George Hanneford

elephants, presented by George Hanneford, Jr. The indoor show played Flowerville, Michigan on Palm Sunday.

The Walker Bros. under canvas show played Taneystown, Maryland on June 6. The arrival of a new European big top was delayed upon arrival in the United States, so the old top was used there. George Hanneford's three elephants were spotted on the midway, along with a moon bounce and a giant slide.

The show was loaded on seven trucks. There were two folding chair seat semis that also carried the ring curbs and props, big top poles, canvas, and bleachers. A semi carried ponies and horses. Another semi contained the ticket office, cookhouse and sleeper. The concession stand and its inventory were carried on a straight truck. Generators were located on tractors pulling the semis.

John-John Walker was ringmaster and announcer. The performance included Paul Navarro, juggler; two young ladies on Roman rings; Lucho, clown; Sashi Walker, pony drill; and the MacEntire Duo, high wire.

In his twelfth year as a circus owner Alain Zerbini operated two shows. The larger show, under a European big top, played extended stands in larger cities. The smaller unit was routed to smaller towns for one day stands as well as a number of fairs. Both units traveled on four vehicles.

The smaller circus played Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania on June 14 under an 80-foot round top with one 42-foot middle section. The Porta and Rosales families provided all of the acts, which included two clowns; a tight wire juggling act; a dog act; a two person balancing act; a strap and aerial perch act; a unicycle act; Melody Zerbini, trampoline act; the Rosales family, juggling and gorilla parody; Julian Zerbini, a Spanish web number; and a space wheel.



Circus Vargas in Huntington Park, California in July. Jerry Cash photo.

Zerbini again played the Franklin County Fair in Columbus in July. The show was in Glen Rock, New Jersey on October 8.

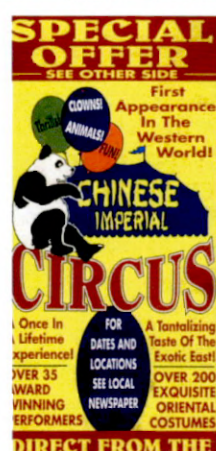
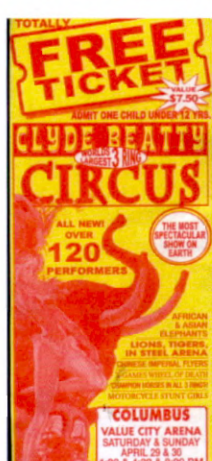
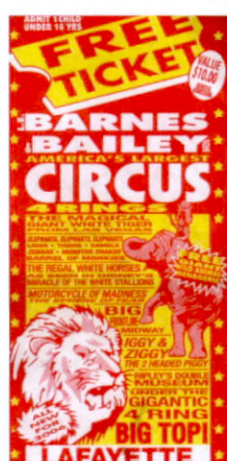
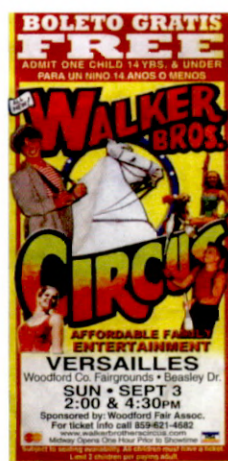
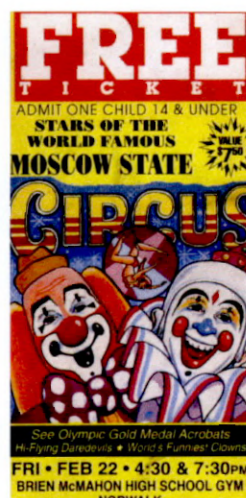
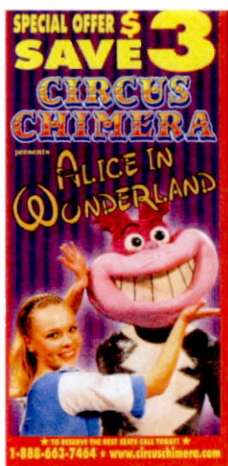
Circus Pages opened in Vero Beach, Florida on January 13. By April 27 the show was in Davenport, Iowa. Vincenta Pages's white tigers were a feature. The show traveled on an elephant truck; a concession truck with trailer; a tiger truck; a bleacher truck; and a cookhouse truck. There were six white tigers; two camels; five ponies; two trained horses and two miniature horses on the show.

The show was in Marysville, Ohio, April 13 and Port Huron, Michigan on July 11 after laying off three weeks in Imlay City, Michigan. The fall tour started in Bad Axe, Michigan on July 10.

James Earhart was ringmaster and juggler. The performance included Vincenta Pages, tigers and a silk act; an aerial lyre; Pages family, camel act; equestrian riding; Ibarras, trampoline, sword balancing and a hula hoop act.

Jorge Pages began to break a new tiger act for Circus Pages's 2007 tour at Mayakka City, Florida soon after taking his daughter's act to Cleveland to join the Ringling show. He had four new tigers and planned on adding two lions.

Bob Childress' Lewis & Clark Circus played Monroe, Georgia, April 7. The performance was given in a blue and white 60 x 90-foot big top. The entire circus was loaded on one flatbed trailer and truck that served as an entrance with a concession stand and ticket office. Albert Buchanan was manager and Bill Brickle was ringmaster, and per-



A large number of circuses continued to make use of children's discount tickets in 2006. However during the year there were occasions when local officials questioned the fact that adult tickets were required.

formed his dog act; Other acts included Armando Ayala, Sr., juggler and perch act; Ronny McMullen, goats; Jose Ayala, Jr., rola bola; Elizabeth Ayala, hula hoops and aerial lyre; Maria Ayala, big and little horse act and camel act; the Goody Goodies, table act and Martine Duo, cube act.

The show had spring and fall tours. Brian LaPalme was featured on the fall tour, which opened in Marion, North Carolina on September 9. The show was in Havelock, North Carolina on September 23. It continued through November, playing a number of dates in the New Orleans area before heading home by way of

Georgia. It was in Carrollton, Georgia on November 17. It closed on November 21.

Trey Key's Culpepper and Merriweather Circus played stands in Arkansas in April. By August 7 it was in Spring Green, Wisconsin. The performance included Mike Rice's performing camels; the Perez Trio, high wire; Carolyn Rice's dog and

Walker Bros. Circus in St. Chairs-ville, Ohio. John Wells photo.



pony review; Miss Simone, single trapeze; the Arlise Troupe, unicycles; Miss Karina, hula hoops; Booze and Leroy, comedy horse; Miss Paulette, bird act; clown Aaron "Mavello" Rider, Los Bonitas, juggling; Natalie Cainan, Eskimo dogs and Barone Duo, juggling.

Gopher Davenport's Bailey Bros. Circus played Beaumont, Texas in January. The show also used the Barnes and Bailey title. The performance included Shane Johnson's wild animal act and Ed Steeples' bears. The show was booked to play San Benito, Texas on February 1-2, but was shut down on January 27 in

McAllen, Texas by the Texas State Attorney General's office. The show drew the attention of the Texas Attorney General after complaints were filed by patrons who com-



The Alain Zerbini Circus in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

plained about receiving free tickets and then having to pay a service charge when attending performances. Circus Chimera, which was in the area, announced that it would accept Barnes & Bailey's discount coupons at their show on February 14 at McAllen.

In February Davenport opened the Great Circus of China. It too ran into trouble when it was found to actually be the Barnes & Bailey show with the performers dressed in Chinese customs. Illinois state officials made the connection and closed the show. Using the American All Star Circus title the show was scheduled to play Traverse City, Michigan, but the local fairground officials said the fire department decided plans were not submitted in time to hold the event. Manager Phil Dolci quickly arranged for the show to play the local Eagles Club.

In September Davenport began using the L. E. Barnes and Bailey Circus title. A fourth middle was added to the big top filled by three rings and the wild animal arena. Added to the show were the Carson & Barnes wild animal act, worked by Casey Cainan; a Sterling & Reid liberty act; performing camels from Cole Bros; and Cainan working Queenie the elephant.

Chewy Davenport and Tommi

The midway of Culpepper & Merriweather Circus. Culpepper photo.



Liebel's Leibling Bros. Circus was in central Wisconsin in July.

Phil Dolci opened his Hendricks Bros. Circus in Marietta, Georgia on March 13. Weather was a problem early in the season but improved in the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland and

New Jersey. Marketing was with free kids' tickets.

He often used Great American as the title, and sometimes Big Top Circus. By June the show was in New Jersey using Hendricks Bros. Great American as the title. The midway contained a ticket office, Ninja Jumps, a "Strange Thing" and snake show, Cheeko's band organ and Frank Murray's elephant.

The performance included the Hector Rodogell family doing rola bola, head balancing, single trap and cubes; Romil, wire walker; Anelya, chiffon act; clown Cheeko, comedy bike act and musical number; Alan Esqueda, juggling; and Frank Murray family elephants and horses.

Dolci closed the show in Belcoville, New Jersey on June 13. He then joined Gopher Davenport's Bailey Bros. Circus as manager.

Wini McKay and Chester Cable's L. A. Circus played the National Orange Show and Festival in San Bernardino, California, May 15-19. The performance was presented under a 2000 seat red and blue big top. Beejay Joyer was ringmaster and juggled.

The show included Bobby Moore's dog act; Mollie and Rebecca Starr's web number; Fernando Campa, club juggling and unicycle; Isabella's silk act; Gary and Kari Johnson's elephant Becky presented by Keith Jones. Josip Marcan's Tiger Encounter also appeared on the midway.

Dick Garden leased

the Clyde Beatty title for a series of indoor dates. The show played Charlotte, February 10-12. When the show was in Upper Marlboro, Maryland at the beginning of April, fourteen displays were presented in three rings including tigers, liberty horses, house cats, elephants, rola bola, hand balancing, space wheel, clown car and juggling.



Bailey Bros. Circus in Zanesville, Ohio in July. Fred Pfening photo.

The show was in Columbus, Ohio, April 29-30. The Value City Arena at The Ohio State University was originally booked, but the building cancelled out three weeks ahead of the dates due to a contract dispute. Garden searched the Columbus area for another location and settled for the grandstand at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. However, the kids' tickets had been distributed with the Value City location. The show placed signs at the arena advising the change of venue, and put up arrows to the fairgrounds location.



L. E. Barnes & Bailey Bros. five pole big top. Harry Kingston photo.

About 500 showed up for the one o'clock performance. Dick Garden announced the show. The acts included Alexis, liberty horses; Jack Cook's comedy car; rola bola in two rings; a clown number; aerial webs and lyre; hand balancing in two rings; a space wheel; Russian swing into a net; house cats; three large horses and big and little horses; and Dondi the



Dick Garden's Clyde Beatty Circus in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

elephant. The troupe moved on a horse semi, two sleepers, a baggage semi and a couple of concession trucks.

The show was in Terre Haute, Indiana May 13-15.

Garden put his under canvas equipment up for auction on August 23 in Anderson, South Carolina. Among the equipment offered were a 140 x 230-foot big top; a 120 x 140-foot big top; three 53-foot semi-trailer bunk houses; a giraffe trailer; ring curbs and rubber floor matting. It was reported that the bids were disappointingly low.

A new Clyde Beatty Circus was announced in November. Ned Toth, a nephew of Frank McClosky, former Beatty-Cole show co-owner, was the president and CEO. The new show was scheduled to play in arenas with a tent version a possibility in smaller areas.

After some years off the road in Puerto Rico, Circo Mundial emerged in October. The acts included the Domingez family, motorcycle globe; Manhica, single trapeze; and Kosmos, motorcycle on inclined wire.

Circo Mundial in Puerto Rico. Brad Weller photo.



Struppi Hanneford's Royal Hanneford Circus played the Sarasota Sahib Circus, April 20-21. Cindy Herriott was ringmistress. The acts were Andri Markov, dogs; Dulce Vital, hair

hang; Benito Aguilar, juggling; the Smirnovs, quick change act; Amanda and Tom, hula hoops and chiffon act; the Harlequin Duo, rag doll act; John Winn, motorcycle on wire and the George Hanneford elephants.

Hanneford played the Jaffa Shrine circus in Altoona, Pennsylvania on April 22. The acts included Clayton Rosaire's cat act; the Carson & Barnes elephants, and the Wallenda high wire act.

The show played the Antioch Shrine date in Dayton, Ohio, the last week of April. Heidi Herriott was ringmistress. The acts included Brian Franzen's tigers and elephants; Miss Alesia, silk act; Benito Aguilar, juggling; the Panfilova house cats; Vladimir and Olga, quick change act; Nellie Hanneford's liberty horse act; Borsch, trampoline; Brett Marshall, BMX bike act; and the Tino Wallenda high wire act. Hanneford day and dated the Ringling Red unit in Dayton.

The Royal Hanneford Circus returned to the Adventureland Amusement Park in Des Moines, Iowa for a summer engagement. The one ring circus was presented under a red and white big top. Billy Martin was the ringmaster. The acts included Carlos and Susanne Svenson, comedy riding; Leo Garcia, space wheel and motorcycle globe; Olga and Vladimir Smirnov, quick-change act; and Angela Martin's single trapeze.

The 2006 Eastern States Exposition, September 15 to October 1, featured a strong Royal Hanneford performance. Ringmasters were Catherine Hanneford Carden and David Maas.

Larry Stout was bandleader. The acts were David Maas's and Dania Kaseva's quick change act; Grandma, played by Barry Lubin's double; Irina Markova's dogs; Raul Castano's dogs; the Marinoff double trap act; Catherine and Brett Carden with three Carden elephants.



Royal Hanneford at the Jaffa Shrine Circus. Paul Gutheil photo.

Tuffy Nicholas' Cirque Hawaii continued in Honolulu all year. His Stars of The Moscow Circus toured only one unit in 2006. In January the show played dates in West Virginia and Ohio. It played Canton, Ohio, May 19 and the Blossom Music Center in Cleveland, May 21. At that time acts included strong man Gulliver; Sinon Arestov, rola bola; Elayne, contortion; clown Coco Kramer; the Akishin Troupe, rope jumping; the Moldovian troupe, teeterboard; Arcadi Andromanache, juggler.

A number of dates were played in Florida in September including Ft. Myers, Port Charlotte, Ft. Lauderdale and Sarasota on October 1. In Wayne, New Jersey, Crosby Espana was ringmaster and did an illusion act. The performers were Alisha and Nicolette, hula hoops; Sasha, dancing; Simon Arestov, clown strongman, rola bola and spinning cube; Great Gulliver, strongman; Beata Rietta, suspended ring act; Michelangelo, hat juggling; Coco Kramer, clown; Miss Alexandria, acrobatics in a suspended net and Princess Ellayna, foot arrow shooting. In December the show played Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama; Gainesville, Florida; and Marietta, Georgia.

Tarzan Zerbini opened his Extreme Circus in Athens, Georgia

on January 13. Tim Tegge was ringmaster. The acts included the Tino Cristiani family, trampoline; Gena Shvartsnab, juggling; Mike Donoho, unrideable mule; Delilah Donoho, foot juggling and hula hoops; the Gonzalezes, dog act, perch pole, Russian swing and rope jumping; and Anthony Thomas, elephants.

It played Bloomington, Illinois on February 1-2. Devin Chandler was ringmaster. The acts there were Martin's poodles; Erika Zerbini, liberty horses; Delilah Zerbini, unrideable mule; Mara Mari, single trapeze; the Cristiani's trampoline; Miss Gena, juggling and the Gonzalez family, perch pole and Russian swing.

The circus drew only about 200 people in Springfield, Illinois on February 4, being caught in the bad publicity garnered by the Great Circus of China. The Extreme show closed in Toledo, Ohio on February 10, blowing dates booked through February 28.

Tarzan Zerbini produced the Fort Wayne, Indiana Shrine Circus, January 26-29. When the show played the western Canadian Shrine circuit Larry Solheim was band director. The acts included the Gonzalez troupe, Russian swing; Miss Gena, juggler; Miss Mara Mari, single trapeze; Patricia Zerbini, elephants; the Ventura Duo, perch pole; Delilah's unrideable mule and foot juggling; Martin's poodles; Erika Zerbini, liberty horses; Garzas, living statues; and the Cristiani family, trampoline.

The Hamid Circus opened in Dodge City, Kansas, February 17-19. It played LaCrosse, Wisconsin March 10-12. Peter Sturgis was ringmaster and Larry Rothbard was organist. The acts included Wade Burck's with seven Cuneo tigers; Pages, Russian Swing; Julia Barreda, hula hoops; David Connor, unicycle; Don Otto, comedy diving; Jill Pages, Roman rings; Shane Hansen, juggling; the Flying Pages; Johnny Peers, dog act; ten girl silk act and the Jacobs-Barreda four African elephants.

The Hamid Circus produced the West Springfield, Massachusetts Shrine show in the Eastern States Coliseum, April 27-30. The acts

included Wade Burck's tigers; Pages, Shooting Stars, Russian swing and flying trapeze act; the Winn family, high pole act; David and Victoria twirling bodies act; Valerie, house cats; and the Jacobs-Barreda, elephants.



The Hamid Circus in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Paul Gutheil photo.

Hamid played the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Shrine the third week of April. Richard Gustafson was ringmaster. The acts there included clown Patrick Cashin; Adam Burck's tigers; Shane Hanson, juggling and cube act; the Pages family, Russian swing, Roman rings; single trapeze and flying trapeze; Valerie, house cats; a quick change act; the Winns, sway poles; and Phil Schacht and his elephant Dondi.

Wayne McCary's so-called Maine Shrine dates started in Manchester, New Hampshire followed by Augusta, Bangor, Presque Isle and Portland, Maine.

Charlie Van Buskirk was ringmaster. The performance included the

Marinof Duo, double traps; the Dandinos, comedy knockabout; Alesya Goulevitch, hula hoops; Johnny Peers's dogs; Gamal David, juggling; Svetlana, chiffon act; Campas family, juggling on rolling globes; the Flying Tunizians; Gennady and Svetlana, rope jumping; and Cindy Morris's elephants.

Serge Coronas's Circus Hollywood appeared at the Florida State Fair early in February. His menagerie and petting zoo with two giraffes were also on display. Coronas opened his Circus Florida in

Bradenton, Florida, March 30-April 2. The circus was presented in a red and blue-striped Canobbio big top. A free menagerie on the midway included two giraffes, llamas, rams, burros, monkeys, horses, a camel and a kangaroo.

Devin Chandler was ringmaster. The acts included the Gonzalez family, rope jumping, tumbling and Russian swing; Carlos Sanches, high wire; Stevanna Coronas, six Friesian horses; Pasquale, clown; Martine Gonzales, dog act; Nicole Coronas, single traps; Steve McNamara, cannon act; and Serge Coronas, motorcycle globe.

As Circus Hollywood the Coronas show played the New York State Fair

The Coronas big top and marquee. Coronas photo.



followed by a series of independent dates including Amsterdam, New York, August 4-5, where bleacher seating was on three sides in the big top. The back door was under a canopy lettered with the show's title. A space wheel was on one side of the ring and a cannon on the other. The acts included a motorcycle globe with two riders; hula hoops; Stevie Coronas with a big and little horses; Nicole Coronas, single traps; clown Pasquale; Miss Crystal, dogs and juggling; Sanchez, space wheel; Sergi, camels and horses and Captain USA, cannon act.

Patricia Gatti's Circus Gatti produced the Los Angeles Shrine Circus in May. John Wilson was ringmaster. The acts included Barbara and Yarro Hoffman's wild animal act; Monica Zerbini, hula hoops; Condorito, clown; Danny D'Oscar, aerial cube act and silk act; Campa's aerial motorcycle; John Pelton, elephant and pony act and big elephant act; Genevieve Lemenu, six pony drill; Elaina and Marika, quick change act; Figueva's dog act; Christine, single trap; Monica, aerial rings; Shvia, aerial hoop; and the Kamborov Russian riding act.

Gatti closed the season in Winchester, California, after a 38-week tour that opened in mid-January.

Ian Garden, Jr. brought Canada's Garden Bros. Circus to the United States for a spring tour. Kids' coupons were extensively distributed. The first stand was in Buffalo, New York. The show played Lowell, Massachusetts, then made a long jump to Cleveland on March 25. The show then went back east to play Syracuse, New York.

By April 15 the show was in Mankato, Minnesota. Adam Kimont directed a six-piece band. The acts included the Shen Yang Chinese acrobats, rotating bungees, Chinese poles and contortion; the Preciados, flying act; Raul Castano and John Kane,



Ian Garden, Jr. and son Chase. Garden photo.

clowns; Chase Garden, ponies; Ian Garden, Jr., liberty horse act; Crina Garden, single trap act; the El Kashmir troupe, teeterboard act; Anthony Thomas, three Carson & Barnes elephants; and Brian Miser with his number two cannon.

The George Carden Circus played the Springfield, Missouri Shrine circus in February. The acts included Juergan and Judit Nерger with the large Hawthorne wild animals; the Toscano troupe, rope jumping; Fusco family, jugglers and gaucho act; Susan Cheryl's dogs; the Gauchos, drums and dancing; Davide and

Susan Zoppe, monkeys; Larry Carden, elephants and the Dominguez family, riders.

Paul V. Kaye's Circus America in Evansville, Indiana, November 23 to 26, was the continent's premier Shrine date, a throw back to the days when many acts filled all three rings. Kaye had produced the Hadi Shrine for many years. In 2006 the production was titled "The Big One."

Prior to each show a calliope concert was presented. The opening spec included the entire company animals and Hadi Shrine uniformed units. The finish was a ten elephant long mount.

Display 1. National Anthem.

Display 2. Circus "Rock" Overture conducted by Clem Toca.

Display 3. Circus America on Parade, walkaround.

Display 4. Aerial number with three cloud swings; two girls on Roman rings; two girls on loops; seven girls on Lyres.

Display 5. Wade Burck with 14 Hawthorne white tigers.

Display 6. Shrine clowns.

Display 7. The Valla Duo and the Belle Duo, aerial cradles.

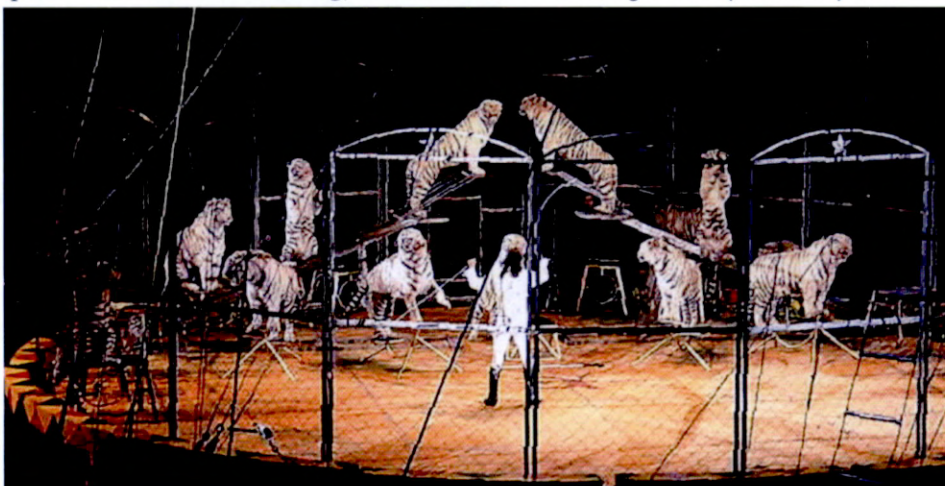
Display 8. Arestov, rola bola; Rolling Diamond, skating act; and Daring Dieter, low wire.

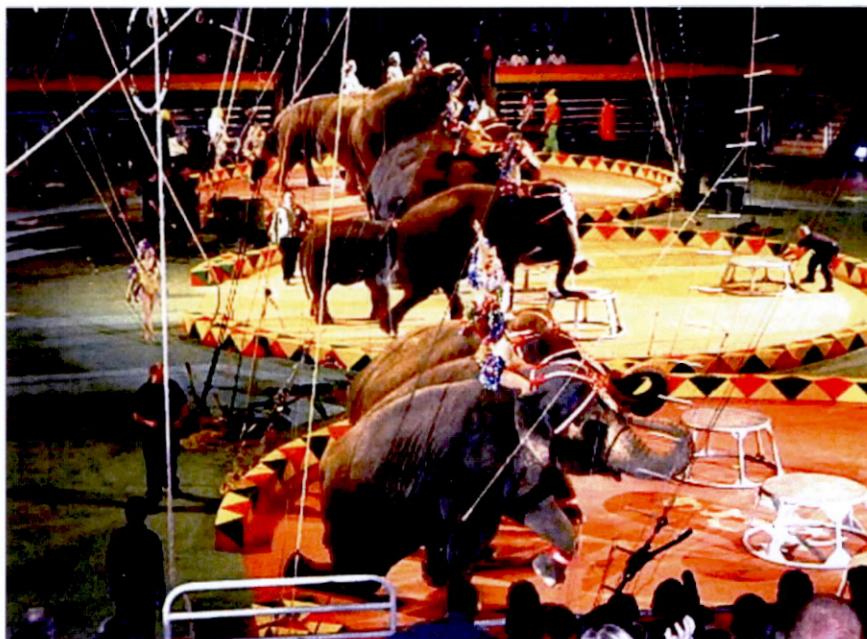
Display 9. Mademoiselle Christina, slide for life.

Display 10. Walker's wonder dogs, Pinson's pups, and Wilson's Canine Stars.

Display 11. Super Simon, fat suit acrobatic act.

Wade Burck with the Hawthorne white tigers. Josip Marcan photo.





Ten Carson & Barnes elephants in the Evansville Shrine Show. Jim Cole collection.

Display 12. Garden's liberty horses, presented by Lord Ian Garden.

Display 13. Aerial ballet with Gabriela, single traps; six girls on single traps and a dozen girls on Spanish webs.

Display 14. Castle's Gypsy bears presented by James Hall, the Zoppe-Rosaire chimps, and Derrick Rosaire's dancing bears.

Display 15. John and Tina Winn, aerial motorcycles.

Display 16. The Flying Pages.

Display 17. Shrine clowns.

Display 18. Ten Carson & Barnes elephants.

Display 19. The Francisco Brothers, high wire act.

Display 20. The King Charles Troupe, comedy basketball act on unicycles.

Display 21. The Centrons (Winns), platform aerial motorcycle.

Display 22. Salute To The Stars and Stripes with giant flag drop.

Display 23. Exit march.

The Nock family's shows operated under the corporate name of Nock Dynamic Entertainment, Inc. Their web site stated they were a full service production company specializing in Circus Arts, Theme Shows and Custom Productions. Their shows were titled Cirque Magnifique, The Nock Family Circus and Nock Thrill

Shows.

Les Kimes's Circus Royale played the St. Paul, Minnesota Shrine date, April 6-9. The show followed the format of former owner John McConnell. Rebekah Monroe was ringmistress. The performance included Cuzin Grumpy's pigs; Jennifer Vidbel, ponies and ménage horse; T. J. Howell, juggling, unicycle; Rafaela, hula hoops; the Geraldos, high wire and space wheel; Jennifer Walker, dogs; Vladimir, silk act; Patricia Zerbini, single elephant; and Dave Smith's cannon act.



The Zoppe Circus at the New York Seaport. Joseph Meyers photo.

The Zoppe Family Circus, managed by Giovanni "Nino" Zoppe, traveled on seven trucks, and performed in a 60 x 90-foot big top that sat about 500. The show opened in Decatur, Illinois on May 3. From May 9 to 15 Giovanni was in Italy in a play. July 12-16 the show was in

Tiffin, Ohio, followed by Cleveland, July 21-23. August 16-29 the circus played the Altamont, New York fair.

The Zoppe show played New York City's South Street Seaport during the summer. It played Northlake, Illinois early in August. The show opened with Nino interacting with children from the audience in clown gags. Other acts included LaBelle, single traps; Rudy Seeman's dogs; Tosca Zoppe, single pony; Davido, slack wire; and Raoul, juggling.

The Jordan World Circus played the Sacramento, California Ben Ali Shrine date, April 20-24. The performances were in a former Kelly-Miller big top. There were no animals in the show. Ari Steeples was ringmaster.

The acts included the Kamborov Russian riders; the Iuiakinas, quick-change act; and the Torravblancas, musical clowns. The high wire and space wheel did not work due to limited height of the tent.

Jordan replaced the long-running Hanneford date at the Columbus Shrine in April. The show was moved from the venerable State Fairgrounds Coliseum to a smaller building with a carnival. The acts included the Winns, motorcycle on incline wire; the Garcias, low wire and flying act; a space wheel; a quick change act; Asante, hand and chair balancing; the Kamborov Cossack riders;

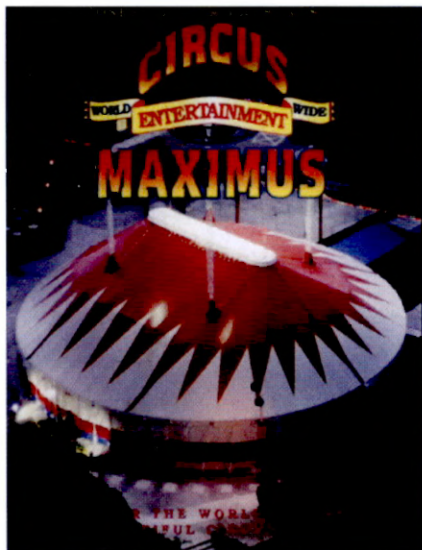
the Hernandaz Duo, chiffon act; Ari Steeples' bears and the Jordan elephants.

Jordan played the Duluth, Minnesota Shrine show late in April. Catherine Hanneford was the singing ringmistress and presented the

Carden mixed animal review. The acts included Vincent Von Duke, six lions and tigers; the Geraldos, high wire; Jody Jordan, motorcycle globe act; the Brandon Duo, roller skating act; Rafaels and Hans Reno, foot jugglers; the Jabali troupe, African dancing, limbo dancing and pyramid building; the Isavetti Duo, double traps; Karoli Zieman, BMX bike act; the Viorel troupe, teeterboard act

and bar act; Dieter Geraldo, wheel of destiny; and Brett and Catherine Carden with three Carden elephants.

George Hubler's Hubler International Circus produced the Youngstown, Ohio, Shrine date, April 21-23. The program included Robekka Monroe, singing ring-



mistress; Cuzin Grumpy's Pork Chop Review; Asia Woodman, cloud swing; Nellie Hanneford, liberty horses; Poema family, risley act; James Hall with Castle's bears; Espana sisters, chiffon; and the Commerford elephants.

Hubler played the Holland, Michigan Shrine show on June 17. John Fugate was ringmaster. The acts in two rings included high school ponies ridden by Vickie Von Uhl and Barbara Van; foot juggling; Tim Tegge, clown; Jill Pages, Roman rings; Don Otto, comedy trampoline; Mercades Pages, hula hoops; Pages family, Russian swing; Vickie Uhl, barnyard review; and Phil Schacht with Dondi the elephant. The Hubler show also played the LaPorte, Indiana Shrine on July 19.

Joe Bauer's Circus Maximus played the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson, October 3-15. The show was presented under Alaine Zerbini's European big top.

The acts included clown Tim Tegge; the Nagatsee Duo, contortionists; Monkzhul, hula hoops; Andrey Markov, juggling; the Javier Martinez family, rola bola, trampoline and boxing kangaroo; the Murcia troupe, high wire and aerial lyre; the

Tunisianis, casting act; the Campa, rolling globes; the Alvarados, double trapeze; and the George Hanneford elephants. Bauer's second unit played Montgomery, Alabama at the same time.

Circus Maximus played the Pensacola Interstate Fair, October 19-29 as a free attraction. John Fugate was announcer. The performers included Erika Zerbini, liberty act; Carina Alarez, single trapeze; the Martinez family, rola bola, space wheel, and a boxing kangaroo; Miss Jennie, diablo; the Gonzales family, dog act, rope jumping and perch pole; and clown Peolito.

The Jose Cole Circus opened its season in Glenville, Minnesota, on March 3-4. The show played its usual route in the upper Midwest. The show was presented in one ring using an air-filled ring curb. A colorful curtain backed up the ring. A concession stand and a moon bounce were on either side. Brian LaPalme served as ringmaster. The acts included Tom Demry, dogs, elephant and Shetland pony; Hansi, single trapeze; Jimenez brothers, acrobatics; Panchico, clown; Brian LaPalme, magic act and fire eating; Princess Jessica, contortionist; and the JoAnne troupe, perch act.

Cindy Migley's Circus Spectacular played Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma in late January and early February.

The Vidbel Circus played the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Zembo Shrine on April 1. The acts included the Barry Lubin, clown; Anastasini family, diablo; Cuzin Grumpy's pigs; Franklin Murray family, elephants; and Dave Smith's cannon act.

Bill Brickle's Wonderland Circus played school gyms and auditoriums from January to March in North and South Carolina. The performers included Kasandra Todegel, single trapeze; the Dresners, gauchos with drums, small bicycle; Hector Rodegel, rola bola and roller skating; Ronald McMullern, live ani-

mal illusions; Bill Brickle, dogs; Justin Loomis, clown and Gladys Dresner, single traps.

Kathy and Oscar Garcia's Garcia Family Circus played Bradenton, Florida in the spring. Kathy was ringmistress and Oscar did the clowning and space wheel. The acts included the Rosales family, hand walking on steps; Yuzhen, diabolos; Javier, foot juggling; Delilah, aerial girl in the moon.

Billy Martin's International All-Star Circus played at various locations in Baltimore, Maryland in April. The performance included Strong Man Gulliver, diving through spinning swords; Simone Arestov, balancing act; Elayne, contortionist; clown Coco Kramer; Askishin troupe, rope jumping; the Moldovian troupe, teeterboard; Arcadie Andronache, juggling on high ladder; Girls of Belarus, acrobatic team; and the Wallendas, high wire.

The Crowell Family Circus played the Tulare, California County Fair, September 13-17. The acts included Ralph Prado, clown; a trampoline act; a magic act and bull whip manipulations.

The Anastasini Circus played a series of Florida dates in February and later played from Georgia to Virginia. After playing the Indiana State Fair it was at the Michigan State Fair, opening on August 22. The performance was presented in an European style 92-foot big top seating 1,000 people. Giovanni Anastasini was ringmaster. The acts included Giuliano, rola bola; a comedy car act; Chiara, hula hoops; Irene,

The Anastasini Circus big top. Anastasini photo.



chiffon act; and the Jacobs-Barreda elephants.

The annual International Showman's Charity Circus was produced in Gibtown, Florida on January 14. Bobby Fairchild's inflatable slide and moon bounce, Nederfield's popcorn trailer, Patty Cook's novelty stand and Terry Frisco's elephant rides were on the midway. Johnny Walker provided the big top and seats. Charles Schlarbaum conducted the band, and Ward Hall was ringmaster. Lee Stevens and Dale Longmire booked the talent.

The acts included the Ron Dykes family, unicycle, single trapeze and juggling; Roy and Yuka Huston and Athena Kolozy and David, illusions; Joann and Trudy Wilson, dog act; Rebecca Ostroff, cloud swing; Sashi Walker, dressage horse; Jack Cook, Funny Ford and Terry Frisco, two African elephants.

The Showfolks of Sarasota's 39th annual circus was presented on December 9 in Robarts Arena. Justin Loomis was ringmaster. The performance included Derrick Rosaire's bears; four girls from the PAL Sailor Circus on Spanish webs; Asia Epsana, silk act; Jason Walker, juggling; clowns Raoul Constanza and Rex Dewitt; Dallas Rosaire-Zoppe, dogs; Susanne Vidbel, cloud swing; Salene and Edion, rola bola; Ulysses Campa, space wheel; Adam Estoban, bounding rope; the George Hanne-

The cast of the International Circus Hall of Fame. John Fugate collection.



ford elephants and the Winn family, aerial motorcycle. Club president Jenny Wallenda produced the show. Tuffy Nichols and Barry Schmoyer provided the ring curb, lights and sound.

The Florida State University's Flying High Circus played Seminole, Florida on March 25. The show was presented in three rings with lots of aerial acts. The acts included hanging perch; five person bicycle act; Roman rings; Chinese poles; Mexican cloud swing; comedy low casting; double traps; hand and leg balancing; slack wire; juggling; rola bola and flying trapeze.

The Redland's Youth Circus played Redlands, California. May 5-7. The Pal (Police Athletic League) Sailor Circus played Sarasota, Florida March 29-31, April 5-8. Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival was held July 15-22. The festival circus presented performances each of the days.

Peru's Circus Hall of Fame opened its performing season on July 8. John Fugate was ringmaster. The big top show included the Anastasini family, Space Ship and aerial act; Brian Franzen's wild animals and elephants; and the Lady in the Moon, aerial act. The Hall of Fame furnished 25 units to the Circus City Festival parade on July 22 including a 1936 Mack truck and a c-1940s Ford tractor.

Cavalia, the Canadian horse show, continued to play larger American cities for the third year in 2006. The show opened in Las Vegas on November 16. The giant big top was set up next to the Rio Hotel and Casino. Originally set to play until December, the engagement was extended until January 1.

Circus Juventas's 2006 show was titled Pazzanni. Founder and artistic director Betty Butler produced it. The performers were students of the St. Paul Performing Arts Circus School. The circus was given on three week-ends in July and

August. A four-piece orchestra accompanied the shows. The students performed unicycles; baton twirling; German wheel; tumbling; silks; unsupported ladder; Russian bar; French trapeze; Spanish web; contortion and Chinese poles.

San Francisco's Pickle Circus's new show was titled High Water Radio. It was conceived and directed by Alotsia Gavia and Rex Camphuis. Three Chinese performers were featured. A lady appearing in a ballerina costume bounced from the shoulders and heads in her toe shoes. Others in the performance included clown Mooky Cornish; Aloysius Gavre and Aidan O'Shea, adagio; and Simon Chaban, fire dancing.

The Bindlestiff Family Cirkus took its cabaret show to Europe, playing Ruigoord, Holland, May 13-16. From September 7 to 23 the Bindlestiff group performed in a Spiegel tent on the south end of Manhattan.

Circus Finelli, produced by Judy Finelli, opened in San Francisco in March. Verka Zaskodna was ringmistress. Four clowns from the Circus Center were featured. The Circus Day Foundation, in St. Louis, operated a year round circus school. The children performed in the St. Louis City Museum. Jessica Hentoff was the Executive and Artistic director.

As in any business, success bred imitation in the circus industry. The phenomenon of Cirque du Soleil spawned other new wave-type shows. Among them was European Cirque, which did special events for corporate clients.

One of the first to enter the field was Neil Goldberg in 1993. Since then he produced over 12 original productions. In 1996 he introduced Cirque Ingenyeux. In recent years Goldberg had Cirque Branson at the Remington Theater in Branson, Missouri.

Goldberg's Cirque of Dreams was something of a *Reader's Digest* version of Cirque du Soleil. A press release stated, "Cirque Dreams is a 90-minute dreamscape of nighttime imagery that redefines the boundaries of imagination. An international cast of acrobats, contortionists and aerialists perform under a multi-mil-

lion dollar ultra violet stage set that ignites them into some of the most amazing feats and performances ever witnessed on stage and in the air. The Raleigh *News* says, 'Cirque Dreams is a jaw dropping and flawlessly executed. Cirque Dreams is the perfect family show and will tour and perform in theaters and arenas worldwide.'

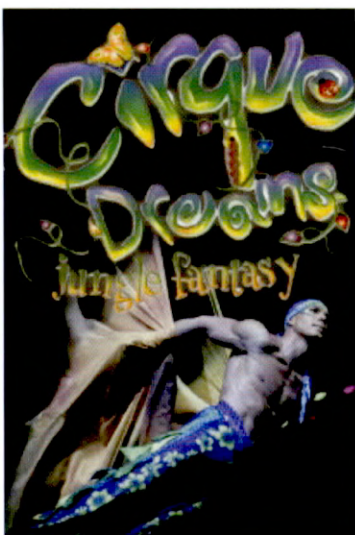
It played Florida, Georgia, and Michigan in March. It later

played the Palm Springs Pavilion in Palm Springs, California. The season closed in Raleigh, North Carolina on December 31.

His Cirque Jungle Fantasy played the Trump Plaza Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, June 13 to September 3. The show played the State Theater in Minneapolis in October. The performance included a Cyr wheel; a jumping rope act; the Mongolian Girls, contortionists; Angel Fraguada, strap act; Russlan Dmytruk, juggler; Naomi Sampson and Sergey Parshin as Duo Butterfly, double aerial act; German wheels; Vladimir Dovgan and Anatoliv Yenyi, double rola bola and a five man statue act.

Cirque Eloize, a Montreal produced theater circus, played the Virginia Arts Festival, January 24 and 25. It was at the University of Iowa's Carver Family Center, February 24-25. The show was titled "Rain" and was directed by Daniele Finzi Pasca. The cast included Oksana Burliy, Russian bar, teeterboard, juggling, swinging clubs and tambourine; Jean-Philippe

Curerrier, Russian bar, teeterboard, juggling and saxophone; Stephane Gentilini, juggling, teeterboard; Catherine Girard, aerial hoop, double fix trapeze and saxophone; Krin Maren Haglund, Roue Cyr, swinging clubs, teeterboard and saxophone; Nadine Louis, contortion, teeterboard and accordion. Bartiomiej Pankau, hand to hand balancing and Russian bar; Jonas Woolverton, acrobatics, rolling globe and accordion;



and Jack Wyskup, balancing, Russian bar, rolling globe and cymbal.

Circus Nexus was owned by Gary Lindsey. The touring show was titled Rites and Rituals. The show was produced and directed by Keith Arsenault. The performance included trapeze, aerial chifon, aerial straps, acrobats, contortion, hand balancing and dancers. It played Port Huron,

Michigan, February 22; Grayslake, Illinois, February 24; Governors State University in University Park, Illinois, February 25; and University of Missouri, Columbia, November 7;



Hazard, Kentucky, November 9; Carbondale, Illinois, November 10; and Normal, Illinois, November 11. Christopher Fleming was director.

The New Shanghai Circus played the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota on February 5. The eighteen performers presented lion dance, barrel contortion, plate spinning, teeterboard, nose balance/ladder, diabolo, hand standing, giant panda, strap act, panda wrestling, contortion, hat juggling, foot juggling, unicycle, hoop diving, and big bike.

As Cirque Shanghai the show opened on June 7 at Chicago's Navy Pier's Crown Theater. The show was created for the summer's engagement, showing as many as 12 times a week. Various problems arose, including

troubled acoustics, outside noise, and inadequate seating. The show also competed against Cirque du Soleil's Corteo, which opened in June for a summer Chicago run.

Sasha Vosk's Global Entertainment Productions's Moscow Circus appeared at Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri, April 6 to May 7. He had a second unit at Dollywood Park in Tennessee. The Circus Contraption's The Grand American Traveling Dime Museum played the Theater for the New City in New York City during the summer. Australia's Circus Oz played a week at the Hawaii Theater in Honolulu in November. The troupe had no animals. The acts included Scott Hone, trick bicycle; Ben Lewis, strap act; Mel Fyfe, trampoline act; a strong lady; and a juggler.

James Plunkett's James Cole Circus played Lincoln, Nebraska March 15-19 and Three River Falls, Minnesota, March 28. San Francisco's Circus Center's 2006 Holiday Show, titled "Traces," opened in the Fine Arts Theater on December 13. Gypsy Snider and Shana Carroll directed it. It was performed by five young actors-acrobats fresh out of the Montreal Ecole de Cirque.

The LindleyLopez Circus production, An Angel's Gift, was presented at the San Diego, California City College on December 15. Cheryl Lindley, the former artistic director of the Fern Street circus, was the producer. It was a tribute to her daughter Sophia, a Fern Street performer, who died in a traffic accident in

Inside the Garcia big top. Fred Pfening photo.



2004. After her daughter's death Lindley opened the Sophia Isadora Academy of the Circus. Her students were featured in new circus productions. The PURE Cirkus played Seattle, Washington December 31. The performance included clowns, jugglers, contortions, acrobats and stilt walkers.

With the tremendous population increase of Hispanics in all parts of the United States Mexican circuses found plenty of Latino audiences to play to. Spanish was spoken in all of them with some shows making announcements in both English and Spanish. Most of the Latino circuses played long seasons.

Jamie Garcia's Garcia Bros. Circus played Naples, Florida late in February. The acts included Leo Garcia, space wheel; Satornimo, juggling; Getti Garcia, hula hoops; Apenitas and Cochoocheen, magic, illusions and sword swallowing; Brandon Duo, roller skating act; Leo and Getti Garcia and motorcycle globe.

The show played Columbus, Ohio, September 10-11 in its usual location in a shopping center in the heart of the Spanish-speaking enclave. The tightly packed outfit traveled on around five trucks. Its unusual 110 x 135-foot big top rose from two masts on a semi-trailer. The performance was presented on the floor of the trailer about four-feet off the ground. The stage and the back door took up about half of the tent. Two rows of chairs were at ringside with bleachers were in back.

Garcia was announcer, all in Spanish. The performance was typi-

Circus Broadway in Fullerton, California in May. Jerry Cash photo.



cal Mexican style with lots of patter from Garcia. The performance consisted of a trumpet-playing clown; a hula hoop artist; a juggler; a skit by a very tall robotic gorilla; Garcia's magic act; a space wheel and a motorcycle globe presented by Garcia's sons. The show had a cannon, but it was not in the show.

Since starting in 1992 Garcia had developed a route in cities with large Hispanic populations through Southern and Midwestern states.



Circus Vazquez in Las Vegas, Nevada. Vazquez photo.

Circus Broadway, owned by Maria Luisa Fuentes Sanchez, played the entire season in California. The first half was a traditional circus. After an intermission the show featured Mexican superstar La Chilindrina singing, dancing and doing comedy. This was a show from Mexico presented in Spanish. The circus played Ontario, California, August 3 to 14.

Circus Hermanos Vazquez opened the season in Las Vegas, February 17.

It moved into California at Huntington Park on March 3 and remained in that state until July 7 when it opened in Dallas. By August 18 it was in Atlanta. It then jumped to Chicago on September 8. The circus had a new combination ticket-office



The Sky Circus in Las Vegas. James Withrow photo.

trailer on the midway. The big top was a purple and yellow Canobbio. The seating was on plastic chairs and bleachers. The show traveled on eight semi-trailers.

The troupe carried a Bengal tiger, an African elephant, two hippos, a camel, a Clydesdale horse, several llamas and a monkey. The two hour performance included the Espanas, Russian swing, motorcycle globe and space wheel; Aldo Vasquez, tiger act; Narali Vasquez, knife balancing and ladder; Chiara Anastasini, hula hoops; six women dancers; Jose Vasquez Atayde, juggling; liberty act



Caballero in Hollywood, California. Caballero photo.

with 2 camels, 2 horses and 2 zebras; Cederios, flying act; Anastasini family, diabolos and musical clowns.

Vazquez then moved to New York City, opening on November 3 on the Shea Stadium parking lot in Queens. Business was so big the engagement was extended to December 3. To comply with New York City Parks requirements no tiger act was presented.

The Sky Circus, operated by the Ramos-Rodogel families, was also playing Las Vegas at the same time. A red and white European big top was fronted by a ticket office and entrance. The performance included a flying act, a motorcycle globe; the Richards brothers, juggling and Kee-Wee, clown.

Circus Caballero Hermanos played Los Angeles late in January. Ruben Caballero, Jr. was ringmaster and announced in Spanish and English. The acts included Irlanda, hula hoops; Pinkey, clown; Angenis, single traps; a dog act; Ricky Rety, Jr., juggling; Spring brothers, trampoline; Leroy Acosta, low wire; Estrella, hair hang; liberty ponies; and the Caballero flying trapeze act.

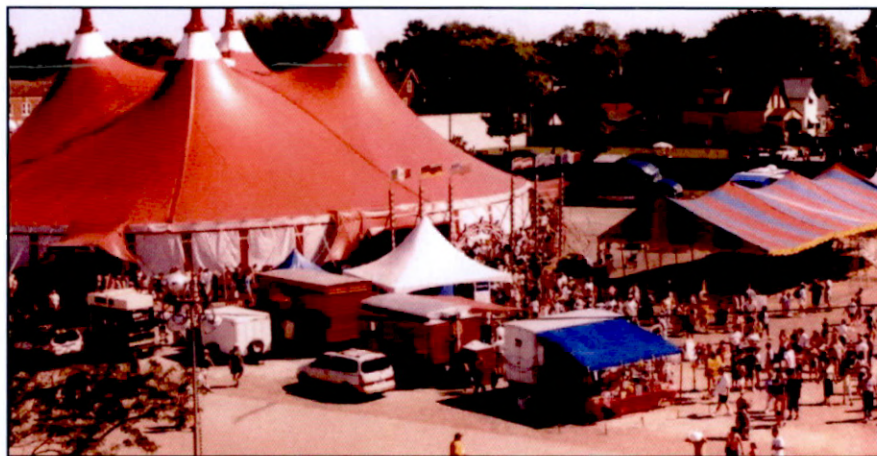
The Circo Osorio/American Crown Circus ventured East from Las Vegas play St. Paul, Minnesota, August 18-21. Pancho, Leo, and Robert Osorio and their parents operated the circus. Kids' tickets and advertising on Spanish language radio composed the marketing effort. A red and yellow two-pole big top



Musical demonstration by David Saloutos. Maury Mead photo.

held seating for around 500. There was one seat trailer and nine-high bleachers.

Robert Osorio was ringmaster. The performance included Luigi, juggler; Veronica, aerial hoops; Joanna, rola bola; the Remy family, unicycles; Sylvia, unicycle; and the Los Hermanos Abadilla Duo, motorcycle globe.



Ricardo and Arcelia Flores's Fearless Flores Circus played Lake Perris, California in November. The show included a space wheel, Roman rings, rope jumping and a riding act.

Dick Monday's New York Goofs conducted their annual Ultimate Clown School, July 24-August 6. The Clown Festival was presented in Brooklyn's Brick Theater in September. The show featured Bill Irwin, Sue Morrison, Philippe Gaullier, Eric Davis and David Shriner.

The Howard and Janice Tibbals Learning Center at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art opened on January 14. The Howard Bros. Circus, built by Howard Tibbals, was displayed on the second floor, along with a model parade built by Harold Dunn. Posters and artifacts were displayed on the first floor. "Celebrate Circus" was the theme of the Ringling Museum Festival, January 28-29. The Windjammers presented a concert of circus music on the afternoon of the 29th.

The Circus World Museum received a \$200,000 grant from the state of Wisconsin on March 9 to be used to redevelop the Baraboo riverfront. The Wisconsin State Building Commission also provided \$100,000 to improve the hippodrome, which was used for the Chinese Circus, which replaced the big top used in past years.

In spite of a very small staff improvements to the museum went forward as the spring opening grew closer. The antique musical instruments were returned to the ring barn. A couple of the buildings

The back yard of the CWM circus at the Wisconsin State Fair. Renee Zastrow photo.

on Water Street were cleaned up and exhibits were installed. The elephant barn was converted into a performing arena for a kid's circus.

The museum opened the 2006 season on May 20. Guiming Meng brought the twelve-person Imperial Chinese Circus to the museum for the season. It was presented twice a day in the Moeller Hippodrome. Extensive restoration was made to the hippodrome including roof repairs, electrical work, lighting upgrades and construction of new backstage dressing rooms and a bandstand. The performance season closed on September 4.

On August 20 the museum held a gala, titled "Circus of Chefs" that netted \$110,000. The museum produced a circus at the Wisconsin State Fair in West Allis, August 3-13, titled "Circus Celebration, East Meets West" under a Canobbio tent. A number of historic wagons from the museum were parked around the big top. The Sells-Floto cookhouse wagon, which served as a gift shop, and the CWM diner were on the midway. Bret Carden also had a colorful tent on the midway for elephant rides.

Five performances were given each day. Catherine Hanneford-Carden was the singing ringmistress. Chinese acrobats presented four men on poles; a lady balancing glasses; Chinese lion dancing and hoop jumping. Other acts included a five person flying act, two Mongolian girls, contortion; a juggler and Bret Carden

with three elephants.

The museum opened the historic Ringling Bros. rail barn on July 27. Tours were given August 13-20. The Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center was reopened on a full-time basis on September 18. Erin Foley, who formerly served as the center's archivist, returned full time.

On November 15 Wisconsin's State Building Commission approved an expenditure of \$1,315,000 to complete the rehabilitation of the 1909 Ringling train shed to replace 290 windows, the train tracks both inside and outside the building, and the gravel floor. Also included were the installation of fire protection equipment and electrical work. The work was expected to start in March 2007.

On December 12 Stephen Freese was appointed executive director of the Baraboo attraction. Freese previously served 16 years in the Wisconsin State Assembly. Since 2005 he worked with The Sweeney Group as a fund-raising consultant. Freese's appointment came after a six-month-long nationwide search and interviews with several candidates. He started in January 2007.

On January 21 Count Roberto Vasconcellos, Charly Bauman, Harold Ronk, the Ward-Bell Flyers and the Bertini family were inducted in the St. Armand's Circle Circus Ring of Fame in Sarasota.

In January Circus Smirkus announced it had raised its goal of \$250,000, and would resume its popular big top tour. Tom Wunderle was tour director. The 2006 show was titled "Tropical Vacation." The under-canvas show played Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Maine. The performance included four clowns as tourists taking a day off from a cruise to visit an island. Performers included Eric Brown, ball bouncing routine; Taylor Wright-Samson, unicycle; Jacob Sharpe and Nathan Stein Sharpe, diabolo; and Isabel Patrowicz and Kia Eastman, double traps. The Wentatchee Youth Circus appeared in Oregon. A flying trapeze



Bros. Grimm performers with the Ozzfest tour. Jerry Sheik photo.

act was among the turns.

Ken Harck's Brothers Grimm Side-show was part of Ozzfest, a music festival produced by heavy metal rocker Ozzy Osborne. The tour began in San Antonio on July 11 and concluded on August 23 in Palm Beach, Florida. In spite of paying heavy commission to Osborne the tour was a winner for Harck. The strong lineup of attractions included Zamora, the torture king; a half boy; a wolf boy; a bearded lady; a Lizard man; Lucky Rich, tattooed man; Angela Ryan, stripper; and a fire eater.

Ozzfest played Columbus, Ohio July 21. It attracted thousands of people. It was hard to distinguish the crowd from the sideshow performers due to the outlandish dress and heavily tattooed bodies of the audience.

Dick Zigun's Sideshow by the Seashore opened in Coney Island on Memorial Day. The attractions included Scott Baker, light bulb eating; Heather Holiday, sword swallower; Insectavara, tattooed lady, fire eater and sword ladder; Donny V, juggler and bed of nails.

The fifth annual Side Show Gathering was again held in Wilkes

Barre, Pennsylvania, September 1-3. Acts appearing there included Zamora, the Torture King; the Bindlestiff Family Circus; Natasha Verushka, sword swallower; and Todd Robbins.

Ward Hall and Chris Christ's Palace of Wonders opened the season at the Florida State Fair in Tampa, February 9-20. The show played the Ohio State Fair in August. The acts included Pete Terhurne, fire eater; Rommy Breen, sword swallower; John LaBrone, human blockhead; Chelsea Rammar, illusionist; Loran Foley, iron tongue; Natalie, glass dancer; Suzie Smith, rubber girl; Logan Jacot, contortionist; and Crystal McLaughlin, midget. The show played the Minnesota State Fair in St. Paul from August 24 to



Chris Christ making an opening at the Meadowlands Fair. Paul Gutheil photo.

September 4. Hall was the subject of an article in the November 13 New York Times.

On August 3 it was announced that the Catskill Game Farm planned to close on October 9. It was opened in 1933 by Roland Lindeman and had been operated by three generations of his family. Over the years the park hired many circus animal acts to perform each day. Buckles Woodcock and his elephants spent many summers there, as did Johnny Welde with his bears.

The grandson of the founder said, "It is a sign of the times that private zoos do not have the appeal of yesterday. The Catskills use to be a thriving resort area, but this generation



The entrance to the Catskill Game Farm. Paul Gutheil photo.

desires more sophisticated entertainment. Each year new federal and state regulations are imposed upon us.

"Having reached the milestone age of 65, I really would like to retire. Children Serena and Chris know what it is to work seven days week just like me. They are young and the world awaits them. Both of them are well educated and will be able to follow their dreams as I have."

An auction was held October 17-18 to dispose of animals, amusement rides, the restaurant and related equipment.

Father George "Jerry" Hogan, National Circus Chaplain, was busier than ever serving the needs of his enormous flock. All his circus activities were in addition to his responsibilities as co-pastor of St. Michael's Church in North Andover, Massachusetts. During 2006 he spent 106 days on the road, celebrating three Baptisms, four First Penances, seven First Communions, two Confirmations and one wedding. He blessed many shows and animals. He celebrated Mass on both the Ringling Red and Blue units and the Big Apple. Father He was perhaps the most well known person in the circus industry.

The saga of the Hawthorn elephants continued when two Asian elephants left on a 650-mile journey late in January from John Cuneo's Illinois facility to a sanctuary in Tennessee, where operators promised a life of ease and comfort. In March, Cuneo donated thirteen bulls, one to Chris Hamblen, and the remainder to the Endangered Ark

Foundation, in Hugo, Oklahoma.

A jury in Northern Virginia found in favor of Ringling-Barnum in the suit against the circus by PeTA. PeTA employees Adria Hinkle and Andrew Cooke faced twenty-two felony counts of animal cruelty in a North Carolina trial in May. PeTA also conducted a campaign against zoos with elephants. The effort caused a number of zoos to remove their long-term elephant displays.

The Syracuse, New York, zoo buckled under to animal rights pressure and arranged to send their two elephants, Targa and Mali, to a Canadian animal park. After their arrival they were introduced to 13 members of their new extended family.

The exception to doing away with elephant displays was Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. The December 19 *Chicago Tribune* told the story, "Brookfield Zoo is planning to expand its elephant exhibit at least fivefold, build a state-of-the-art indoor house and increase the num-



Father Hogan blessing a Ringling-Barnum train. Hogan collection.

ber of pachyderms from two to six, zoo director Stuart Stahi said Monday.

"The improvements, which would cost tens of millions of dollars and be a part of a sweeping master plan to modernize the entire zoo, are about

seven years from realization and still in the planning stages, he said. But it comes at a time when some institutions are shuttering their elephant exhibits altogether amid charges that zoos are inhumane places to keep earth's largest land animals.

"Lincoln Park Zoo shifted camels into the elephant enclosure this year after three of its elephants died over a 7-month span starting in 2004."

Brookfield joined more than 40 North American zoos in the process of going the other way—expanding and upgrading their elephant exhibits to give the animals more room to roam and interact in the complex matriarchal social groupings as they would in the wild.

It was a sad finish for *Amusement Business* magazine when it published its final issue in May. *AB* was the successor to the *Billboard*, the circus Bible.

During 2006 the following passed on to the big lot. Joseph Galasso, performer; Gracie Hanneford, lady rider; Dave Hoover, wild animal trainer; Marian Knowlton Parrello, rider; Alex Konyot, horse trainer; Fred Logan, animal trainer; Bunnie Bartok-Perez, circus performer and owner; William "Shorty" Shearer, performer; Jenda Smaha, elephant trainer; Robert "Buck" Steel, Western performer; Bucky Steele, elephant trainer; David "Happy" Twomey, circus owner; and Duina Zacchini, human cannon ball.

We again thank Jerry Cash and Paul Gutheil for sharing their extensive selection of photographs. Other contributors included Pete Adams, Chuck Burnes, Dick Britton, Buddy Calhoun, Fred Dahlinger, Pat Davison, Frank Felt, Ray Gronso, A. I. Garner, John Hart, Bill Hall, Gene Hembree, Maxine House, Paul Holley, George Hubler, Walt Hudson, Barbara Hoffman, Toto Johnson, Harry Lea Kingston, Edward Limbach, Ernie Miller, Edward Meals, Joseph Meyers, Dan McGinnis, Miles R. McCarry, John Polacsek, William Rice, Dick Mong, Bill Rector, Richard J. Reynolds III, Bill Rhodes, Jim Royal; Peter Rosa, Alex Smith, Pablo Jaime Saninz, Bill Strong; Tim Tegge, Ron West, Alfrieda Wilkins and Herbert Ueckert.

Racism Was Ever Present For Pioneer Black Circus Performer

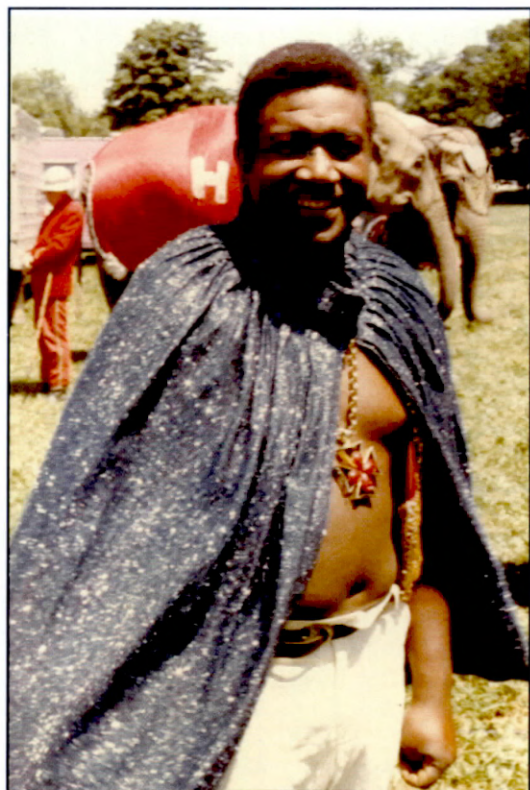
By Lane Talburt

Like most wild animal trainers, Manuel "Junior" Ruffin's body bears the scars of his battles with lions and tigers inside the steel arena. Unlike the others, however, Ruffin's psyche has suffered the degrading taunts and slights of racism.

From 1952, when he became Clyde Beatty's cage boy until 1987 when he suffered a career-ending leg injury, Ruffin broke through an almost unending series of racial barriers in becoming America's pioneer black circus animal trainer, tent master and trainmaster.

Although outwardly he sloughs off the effects of racial discrimination during his performing career,

Junior Ruffin on Hoxie Bros. in 1969.



"Junior," as he is known by his legions of friends and well-wishers, does not yearn for the days of the Sixties. That's when he was putting cats through their paces in the steel cage before straw houses in the South, yet no white circus fan would be caught dead sitting in the almost-empty "colored" section inside the Hoxie Bros. tent.

At the same time, racism in the Midwest was as bad as any he experienced in the South, Ruffin insists. Ruffin credits his ring name, "Prince Bogino," supposedly an African prince, for earning at least a modicum of acceptance from many patrons. He proudly credits Walter McLain for breaking the race barrier as boss of the legendary 50-elephant herd with Ringling Bros. in the 1940s (but McLain wasn't a performer).

And prior to King Charles Weathers by becoming the first black bandleader under the big top with Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. in the early Fifties, African Americans were seldom seen except in side show minstrel bands and as workmen--always eating and sleeping in segregated dining facilities on or off the lot.

It was apparent that Ruffin would be treated differently--if not deferentially--when he joined on the Clyde Beatty Circus in 1952 as the wild animal trainer's cage boy. Ruffin, tagged "Junior" by Beatty because he couldn't remember his 14-year-old charge's name, found himself having his own bunk bed in the workmen's train car. Others generally did not pick fights with "Beatty's

boy," although the rag-tag youth had his share of fisticuffs, as he became a stocky teen in the circus backyard.

Now 68 and retired near Sarasota, Ruffin genuinely enjoys sharing his experiences before fan audiences, as he did at the 2006 Circus Historical Society convention.

Following his well-received presentation, he sat down for a four-hour review of his escapades in the bright poolside sun at the Sarasota Cay Hotel. Actually, Ruffin was holding court, relating--as he always does during his story-telling appearances--a series of jackpots about his long-deceased mentor that only an insider could tell.



Ruffin was trainmaster for the Monte Carlo Circus.

The gregarious ex-performer does not dwell long on the issue of racism. Instead he prefers to bask in his Huck Finn-type stories when he served as Beatty's underling. He regales in his own successes as a solo performer with the big cats. Ruffin also proudly recalls events which led him to become Hoxie Tucker's and Cliff Vargas' tent master, and trainmaster on the short-lived Ringling Bros. Monte Carlo unit. He was a guiding light in the formation of UniverSoul Circus, the first African-American circus, for which he never received compensation as a consultant, as he not too diplomatically points out.

Even though his retirement was forced by an accident in the Ringling

train yards in Palmetto, Florida--an accident that almost severed his left leg, Ruffin is still focused on returning to the circus. While taking a lunch break during the Circus Historical Society convention in May 2006, the stocky former trainer corralled veteran side show owner Ward Hall and promoter Bob Snowden to enthuse about the possibilities of framing a new Wild West show. As envisioned by Ruffin, the performance would pay tribute to the cowboys--black, white and Hispanic--who ranged the American frontier. It would include Indians in their full regalia, bison and other acts, just like Buffalo Bill Cody offered in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The stories of those black cowhands from an earlier era have largely been lost or forgotten. But not the exploits of Junior Ruffin. He regularly entertains circus fans and former performers at the Showfolks Club in Sarasota where years earlier he was denied entry because of his skin color.

Born Emanuel (he shortened it to Manuel) Ruffin on April 28, 1938, in Los Angeles, he insists he was never aware of racial discrimination until he joined Beatty's three-ring railroad circus in 1952. After all, he was raised in a segregated neighborhood in L.A., not far from the traditional downtown circus lot at Washington and Hill streets. Ruffin remembers seeing the Dailey Bros. and Cole Bros. circuses there in previous years. His Grandmother Sarah, who practically raised him and whom he fondly refers to as "Mom," feared exposing Ruffin to the "riff-raff" "employed by carnivals and circuses which frequented the area.

"I think I was 13 turning 14, somewhere in that area. And I decided I didn't want to go to school." Ruffin also recognized that he was becoming a financial burden to his grandmother, who was rearing him along with his siblings and cousins. "I started looking at my lifestyle, and it wasn't getting any better."

Against strict orders to the contrary, Ruffin sneaked off from his grandmother's house and under the circus tent during the early part of the show's three-week run in Los Angeles. He watched enthralled as



MANUEL (JUNIOR) RUFFIN
Boss Canvasman

CIRCUS VARGAS performs beneath the world's largest traveling Big Top and the man responsible for that giant canvas arena boasts an enviable reputation in all phases of the under-canvas circus.

Manuel Ruffin -- known to everybody as "Junior" began his circus career at age 12 as cage boy to the immortal Clyde Beatty, a position he held for twelve years.

"Junior" was taught the art of animal training by Beatty and later, became the first black wild animal trainer in America.

At the same time Ruffin learned all there is to know about under-canvas circuses. He has supervised tent crews for all major American tented circuses in every state of the nation.

This article about Ruffin appeared in the 1975 Circus Vargas program.

"the king of wild animal trainers" put 18 to 20 cats through their paces within the steel bars of the arena. "I thought he had to be Superman to do something like that."

Afterward, the impressionable youth had his first encounter with Clyde Beatty in the backyard. "He said, 'I'd bet you'd like to be a lion tamer.' And I said, 'No way.' It was the most scary thing that I had ever seen, because those animals used to fight right out of the cages into the ring."

The rebellious teen, the second of 12 children by his mother, got the promised whipping when he returned to his grandmother's house. Ruffin chuckled while explaining his only solace was getting to select the switch of his choice from a backyard tree. "To this day, I think of Grandmother Sarah many times, and she was getting me into the right path and destination. Because

throughout my lifetime and traveling, I've seen a lot of things, but I always knew right from wrong. And I stayed away from wrong."

Despite his promises that he would not return to the circus, Ruffin was hooked. It presented him an opportunity to act on another promise he had made to his father, a gambler with a mean streak who had as little to do with Manuel as possible.

During one of those brief stays with his dad and stepmother (he doesn't remember ever seeing father and mother together), "we had an argument, and I told him, 'You know what? I'm going to do something in this world that you yourself are going to be proud of me.

"And I carry a scar today where he threw a claw hammer at me; it hit me on the (left) shoulder here. And if I hadn't thrown my hand up, it probably would have killed me."

The youngster returned to the Beatty lot numerous times during that run.

"When I got out of school I would go up there and talk to Clyde Beatty (while) he would sit there and cool off in his wagon that he used for a dressing room. Matter of fact, I have a photo of Clyde Beatty and me, when I was 15 years old. He was looking out the dressing room window, and I'm standing there loading his gun.

"But I got to know Clyde Beatty in those few days. I could go right in and sit right down."

Finally, with his father's permission, Ruffin dropped out of school and asked Beatty for a job. "Well, OK," Beatty said. "But you're going to have to listen." And I said, "Alright."

At \$7.50 a week plus meals and a top bunk all to himself in the workmen's car, Manuel became Beatty's cage boy, a task he would tackle for the next five years.

"Remember, those lions were not the type of animals like they have in animal acts today (mostly bred and raised domestically). Those animals would eat you up if they got a hold of you, you know what I mean? So you had to be on your Ps and Qs all the time."

Because he didn't drink or gamble or carouse with the other workmen, Ruffin devoted most of his time with the cats.

"I knew them all (by name and personality). I used to sit behind the cages and look at them. I'd do the Clyde Beatty stare. It's a funny thing about the lions, especially lions. I could look at them in the eye, and they'd look at me, and they'd get tired of looking at me, and do you know what they'd do? They'd start looking behind me, around me, up and around, and they'd get up. And the minute I'd start looking around, they'd look at me again."

When any workman attempted to limit his access to any part of the lot, another worker would quickly intercede with these cautionary words: "Do you know who that is? That's Clyde Beatty Junior. That's Clyde's son. Let him go."

Thus Ruffin earned the nickname "Junior," a moniker especially preferred by his mentor, who couldn't remember "Manuel."

And Beatty treated his young charge just like a son. "Clyde Beatty never said a racial word, a slur to me all the years that I worked for him."

Ruffin clearly recalls an incident when Beatty showed disdain for any deferential talk from black workmen.

"One day we were coming across the grass and one of the day laborers, a black man, walked up to him and took off his hat and said, 'How you doing, Mister Clyde?' Beatty said, 'Alright.' The workman said, 'Mister Clyde, you be careful in there, boss. You know what? Those old lions in there, they get a hold of you and we won't have a job.'

As the workman walked away, Beatty grabbed Junior by the arm roughly. "Listen to me," Beatty intoned threateningly. "Do you see the butt end of this whip? If I ever see you act that way, I'll use this on you."

The trainer concluded the lecture: "You're going to be intelligent every minute of the day."

Beatty, a Hollywood celebrity with movies and serials to his credit, always insured that Ruffin was included in the goings-on when other personalities and their families were guests of the circus for a day during its annual Los Angeles run.

"And do you know the man who was my hero back then? His name was Hoot Gibson," a cowboy star who

appeared in circus Wild West after shows.

As bonds grew between Beatty and Ruffin, Junior became a member of the family household and even a business confidant.

"As time went by there was a lot of resentment. And not only from the workingmen but also from the bosses. Because they knew I was in on a lot of conversations, a lot of decision-making.

Beatty "would let me make decisions about the performers. He'd tell me, 'Junior, you go in there and watch.' (Ruffin spent a lot of time under the big top during performances). 'And you let me know whether we should keep that act for next year.' And the performers would get a whiff of it, and they'd be nice to me."

Ruffin also overheard many financial conversations—all of which he kept private—between Beatty and his financial backers, including Mrs. Frank Walters of Houston, Texas, whose son fielded a circus with cowboy actor Ken Maynard in the mid-1930s.



Mr. & Mrs. Frank Walters

"Mrs. Walters kind of took Clyde Beatty under her wing, and anything he needed, she was the financier."

Junior quickly learned how to manipulate these money confabs to his advantage. Even though he earned cherry pie carrying trunks and paraphernalia for performers, Ruffin would still hit up his mentor for an occasional five-dollar handout, only to be rebuffed. "And if I waited, I noticed a few times when the big

shots were around. And they used to want to amuse me. And they'd say, 'Clyde, your son is here.' And he's say, 'Oh, he's alright.' And I'd say (to Beatty), 'Now listen, if you want to give me that ten dollars that you told me you were going to let me have a while ago.' And I'd say (to the owners): 'Don't you think he should give it to me now?' They'd say, 'Yeah, yeah.' Chagrinned, Beatty would say, 'We'll talk about this later,'" while at the same time reaching into his pocket for a 10-spot.

Even though Junior's relationship with Beatty blossomed, it was sometimes a different story with the wild animal trainer's second wife, Jane, who was the mother of the real "Clyde Beatty Junior." (Beatty's first wife, Harriet, who also performed in the cage with lions, had died of a heart attack in 1950.)

He remembers the day when the tension between Jane and him came to a head in the late fifties, after Beatty's rail show converted to trucks. "We never got along in the first place." Ruffin was in the family trailer when Jane spoke up in a huffy tone of voice. "Junior, when we finish eating this afternoon, I'm going downtown. I'm going to buy you a present."

"I said, 'Thank you.' And I was walking out and she said, 'Where are you going?' And I said, 'I've got things to do.' And she said, 'You just wait until I tell you.'

"Then she said, 'Let me tell you what I'm going to buy you. I'm going to buy you a hearing aid.' I said, 'I don't need a hearing aid.' 'Oh yes you do,' she said, 'because I told you I wanted this (linoleum) floor mopped every day.'

"I decided to let it out," Ruffin recalls, again with a chuckle. "I said, 'Let me tell you something.' She said, 'What did you say?'

"I said, 'Let me tell you something right now. I'm not your butler; I'm not your maid, and I'm not your porter. I'm a gun bearer and animal trainer. But I'll tell you what, if you can get anybody to do all this work you want done for what you pay me, I'll be glad to leave.'

"And she jumped up and said, 'Well, Papa (Jane's name for Clyde), are you going to let him talk to me

like that?' He said, 'I didn't hear nothing. That's between you and him.'"

But that night, as he was getting ready (for the act), he said, 'Junior, I thought you were a little rude.' I said, 'Yessir, you was right.' He said, 'You know how Jane is. Don't let her get the best of you. You're smarter than that.'



The Beatty-Hamid-Morton program used at Palisades Park in New Jersey.

"And when they were together later, I told her, 'I want to apologize. Really.' But I would never say anything like that outside in the public."

Even though Beatty didn't want his trainee to be too deferential, he nonetheless demanded respect.

Again, Junior recalls an incident when he was still a teen with an attitude. "We were playing a bad lot, a very bad lot. It was like a cornfield. And you know when Beatty worked, everything had to be topped smooth in the ring because of the fighting act."

"And I was in there with a wheel barrow and shovel, and I had cleaned it all out. And he came in and took off his glasses and started messing with the ground. And he looked at me (and asked): 'do we have a problem And I said, 'No, I don't have a problem.' He said, 'Well I walked in here and you didn't even speak to me.' I responded, 'Well, you didn't speak to me.' He said, 'Wait a minute. Why would I

have to speak to you? And I said, 'Well, why should I speak to you. And he said, 'I'm somebody; you're nobody.'"

With that, Ruffin let out another belly laugh. "But that's the way he was, you know what I mean?"

When the circus star wasn't around, Junior often had to fight his way out of racially-tainted brawls.

He seldom heard the "n" word, but frequently was referred to as a "jig"--along with members of the sideshow minstrel band and other black workmen. He gradually won the respect and friendship of most white workers and performers.

Although Beatty may have been a father figure to Ruffin, he was no teacher--at least when it came to handling lions and tigers. Everything Junior learned was through observing Beatty in the ring and around the animals' cages. Ruffin was 15 when Beatty let him step into the ring alone with three or four cats during a practice session,

Ironically, Ruffin's first solo appearance as a performer before a

live audience was not with cats but with a trio of elephants. When he had joined the Beatty circus in Los Angeles in 1952, Ruffin recalls that Slivers Madison was elephant boss; he later was replaced by Richard Shipley. Because Junior liked to hang around the elephants, Shipley began to train him to work with the bulls.

In 1958 Ruffin joined Beatty and other performers when they opened at Palisades Park in New Jersey for the Hamid-Morton Circus. With a total of nine Beatty elephants in three rings, Junior worked three in an end ring.

Ironically, he recalls, George Hamid had to pull a tumbling act from the line-up because four members of that troupe of Arabs were a

little too dark skinned for the white audience's tastes. In short, the circus promoter bowed to racial discrimination.

"And somebody asked (Hamid), 'Why did you do that when Junior was working the number one ring?' And he said, 'Well, that's different.'"

By that time, the Beatty show had switched to trucks, its last season on rails coming to a premature halt in August 1956--the same year Ringling folded its canvass for the last time and temporarily eschewed the railroad for trucks as its prime form of transportation. Earlier that same year, Beatty lost control of his circus when it ceased operations in Deming, New Mexico.

The show was revived under the ownership of Frank McCloskey and Walter Kernan, who financed another 12 weeks on the road before closing at the dog track in Sarasota. In 1958 it was renamed Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, a title that lasted until 2004 when the circus was billed as Cole Bros. and downsized to a one-ringer.

When the circus headquarters first moved to Deland, Florida, in the Fall of 1956, Ruffin met a new friend, Charlie Smith, who had been hired to convert the Beatty show to trucks. Later that year, Smith was hired by Art Concello to likewise help Ringling Bros. change over to highway transport. Still later, after serving as Ringling trainmaster on the Red Unit, Smith would hire Ruffin to help him in the train yards at Palmetto.

Advertisement for Beatty's Jungland.



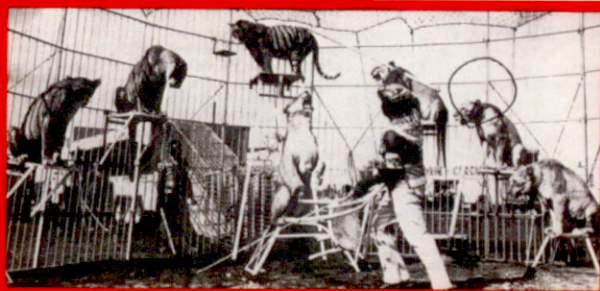
In 1959, Ruffin himself had an offer too good to refuse: Evelyn Curry, wife of well-known hockey star Harry Curry, boosted Junior's pay from \$50 to \$300 a week to break in a group of young lions that she had just purchased.

"She had all her training facilities



PRINCE BOGINO

Prince Bogino, the only black wild animal trainer in America has been featured in several national magazines, and in a number of Tarzan movies, along with the lions and elephants of Hoxie Bros Circus. His constant exposure to danger thrills and chills audiences at every performance of the Hoxie Bros. Circus.



A page from a Hoxie Bros. program.

in Chattanooga, Tennessee, but she and her husband owned a lot of junk stands at Playland, in Far Rockaway, New York."

Ruffin replaced former Ringling cat trainer Hans Newman, who had departed abruptly. "And that's why I went to Chattanooga. But then I found out that it was worse than I thought—either it was disorganized, or I didn't have enough knowledge (to handle the task), one or the other.

"I almost got killed (by cats) down there. The tigers—nobody told me

there would be tigers—ran up on the pedestals. And a lion was bouncing me, and I was right in front of this tiger, and it grabbed me in the back of the leg. And it tore the muscles out of the back of my leg."

When coupled with Jim Crow segregationist policies he faced in Chattanooga, "I figured it was time for me to get away from there. And the season was folding down anyway, so that's when I went back to work for Clyde Beatty. I just walked in (to Beatty's training compound in Jungleland).

"And Beatty had some young tigers that he had bought, and somebody hollered, 'Junior's in the house.' And Beatty said, 'Send him down here.'"

The veteran trainer promptly turned over the newly acquired tigers to Ruffin and took the next plane out to return to his home in Ventura, California.

That provided Ruffin the opportunity, at age 19, to become a star performer with the cats at Jungleland

Ruffin presenting elephants on Hoxie Bros.

on U.S. Highway 1 in North Miami—later to be the site of Tucker's winter quarters where Ruffin was to lay over during his performing time with Hoxie Bros. Junior's taking over the Jungleland act also enabled Beatty to tour with the truck circus.

Once again, however, Beatty's departure reopened the wounds of racism for Ruffin. As he dropped off the charismatic lion tamer at the airport, Ruffin was handed Beatty's Cadillac keys with the instruction that it was his for the duration.

"And I said, 'You know they're not going to let me keep this car.' Beatty wrote a letter and left it in the glove compartment. And he said, 'Anybody give you any trouble, have them read this letter.'

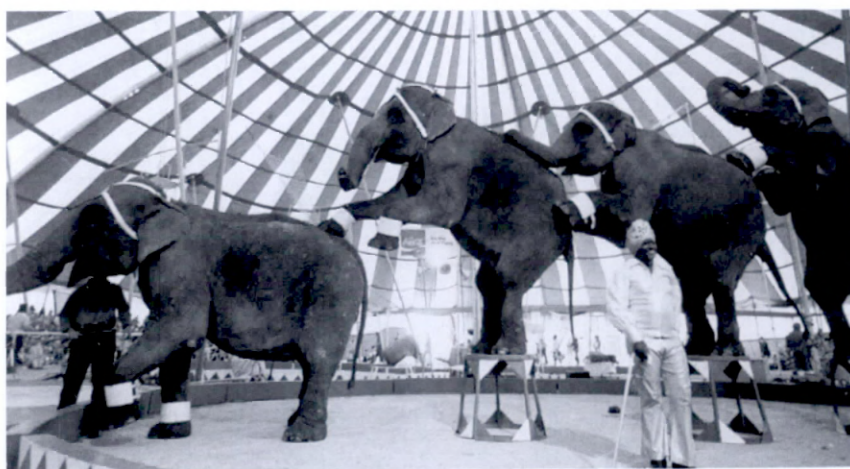
"So when I came back (to Deland) from the airport, the mechanic, known as 'Governor,' said, 'Pull it (Beatty's car) over there and give me the keys.' I pulled it over and gave him the key and said, 'You'd better read that letter in the glove compartment.' He sent another guy over and read the letter, saying 'Clyde Junior' could keep the car. You know what (the mechanic) did? He throws the keys over there into the weeds. I'll tell you what, every chance they got, they threw little punches at you."

Ruffin vividly remembers his last meeting with his long-time mentor at Deland quarters, just before Beatty died of cancer in 1965.

"He was 62. It must have been January or February. And he came up to me and said, 'How are you doing, Junior?' I said, 'OK.' And then Sam Cole said, 'Jesus Christ, Junior, there's a guy who raised you and you just say, OK?' And I said, 'Who was that?' He said, 'Clyde Beatty.' I said, 'Where?' And he said, 'He just went out the door.'

"And I went out there and I looked at him. I couldn't believe it. I really couldn't, because he was down to 89 or 98 pounds because cancer had ate him up.

"And (Beatty) said, 'Sit down, Junior.' And then he said, 'You know what, Junior? You remember when you were about 15 or 16 and you asked me when a person reached his goal?' And I said, 'No, I don't remember.' He said, 'Yeah, you asked me. And I told you when you could not do



the things that you used to do any more, that's it.' I can't do it any more, Junior.'

"Can you imagine what a shock that was to hear a man like Clyde Beatty say that?"

Beatty died at his home in Ventura on July 19, 1965. The carved head of a majestic male lion guards the trainer's tombstone in Forest Lawn cemetery in Los Angeles.

UPPER MIDWEST WAS NO RACIAL HAVEN, EITHER

"We don't serve your kind in here!"

If he heard bartenders and storekeepers say it once, Ruffin heard the Jim Crow phrase repeated dozens of times during his circus career.

In his own experience, though, the Midwest was just as bad as the South for racial intolerance. Two experiences particularly stick in his mind, both occurring when he was touring with Howard Suez's Clyde Bros. Circus in the early 1960s. Here's Ruffin in his own words:

"We were playing the fairgrounds outside Deadwood, South Dakota. We had a Sunday off, and all the guys headed downtown (to a bar). And by my being out there, being a minority, it was a problem.

"So when I went in, it was downstairs, and let me tell you what I saw. Normally when I walked into a bar, the (customers) would look at me, and if they'd go back to what they were doing, it was OK. But if they kept staring, I knew I was in trouble.

"In this bar everybody kept staring, so I went to the bathroom and stayed about two minutes. I came out and started across to the prop guys who were sitting, and they hollered, 'Come on over, Junior.' That got the attention of one of the bartenders (who turned out to be the joint's owner). He ran over and grabbed me by the arm and said, 'Listen, you're now allowed in here. And you're not welcome in here. Get out of here.'

"And I said, 'Let me tell you something for your benefit. I'm with the circus, and to you see those 15 or 20 guys over there? If I don't walk over there, and you keep harassing me, those people are going to tear this

place down. I don't want that to happen?'

"He asked me, 'What can you do about it I said, 'Just go with me.'

"So I went over to the (circus) guys, and I said, 'You guys are going to be here for a while, right. And they said, 'Yeah.' And I said, 'I got to take care of something' (back at the lot). The workmen said, 'Hey, wait a minute. This bartender, is he bothering you.' I said, 'No, I'll be back.' See, my deal was trying to get out of there without a problem.

So I got up the stairs and out on the sidewalk heading toward a red light on the corner. This bartender is screaming, calling me all kind of names, saying, 'You kind of people are just destroying America because you're spreading your poison all over.'

"So when we crossed the street together, I grabbed him because I was frustrated so bad. Guess who was pulling up (in a car)? Police. They grabbed me; they slung me against the wall; they took the nightstick to my throat, and I thought they were going to kill me, you know. They put the handcuffs on me.

"The bartender told (one of the officers), 'I own the bar across the street. I'm glad you came up because you see the way (Ruffin) was talking to me?'

What are you going to do, put him

in jail?"

"Wait a minute,' the officer said.

"Did he start trouble in your bar. The bartender said, 'No, I got him out of there before anything happened.' Then the officer said, 'Why are you over here.' 'Well,' the bartender said, 'You know what? I got no use for them people anyway. I just wanted to teach him a lesson.'

"Then the officer said to me, 'Let me hear your problem; let me hear your side of the story.'

"I said, 'I'm the one with the handcuffs. That makes me already guilty.'

"So the officer released me from the cuffs. I told him, 'Listen, I'm with the circus, and I'm leaving the day after tomorrow. I don't care if I ever get back to your city again. I just want to be treated like any other human being. I didn't start no problem. And this guy (the bar owner) ran me out of his place.'

"The policeman said, 'Well, you could sue him.'

"(The bartender said), 'Don't educate him. If they don't know, keep them dumb.'

"And the cop told him, 'You keep quiet.'

"I said, 'No sir, I don't want to press charges.' And I didn't."

Hastings, Nebraska, earned a "dishonorable mention" for a second bigoted incident recounted by Ruffin.

"I walked into a bar with a friend of mine, and the bartender just looked at me (Ruffin's face displayed a grimace). He was just staring at me and said, 'What do you want.' My friend said, 'I'd like to get two pitchers of beer.' The bartender asked, 'You going to drink two pitchers of beer'. 'No, one's for me and one's for my friend.' The bartender (still glaring at Ruffin) said, 'We don't serve your kind, and we don't serve them that brings them in here.'

"So I know how it works, even to this day. It never gets away. It's like a mole. It's a memory that will stay there forever, you know what I mean?"

WARD HALL INITIATES CLIFF VARGAS IN THE 'BENIES' OF A CIRCUS SIDE SHOW

By WARD HALL
(as told to Lane Talburt)

Ward Hall



(Author's note: Any circus buff who has ever engaged Ward Hall in conversation knows it only takes a key word, or phrase, to trigger the colorful raconteur's mental data bank of more than 60 years on the American circus and carnival sideshow circuit. So it was when Hall interrupted the writer as he was interviewing Junior Ruffin at the CHS convention in Sarasota in May 2006. Just passing by, Hall had overhead Junior recalling his days as tent master with Circus Vargas in the early 1970s. With the mention of the trigger word "Vargas," Hall sat down, took over the microphone and proceeded to recall some of his experiences with the late circus owner. Here are portions of that video recorded jackpot session, in Ward Hall's own words, rich in detail and replete with a "Vargasm." Parenthetical comments are the author's.)

The first time I heard of the Vargas show (probably in 1970), there was a story, and it originated in St. Louis and hit the wire services. Vargas had the Miller & Johnson show. He was showing St. Louis (with the Fraternal Order of Police as sponsor) I think, with phone promotions.

He was scheduled to give five shows, and they had sold 82,000 tickets. And each show could seat 3,500 people. So he was being investigated by the state's attorney general (on the basis of) did he commit fraud because he sold more tickets than he had seats for. Of course, all the phone shows did that.

But when I saw that, I thought, "Oh my God. There's a show that's going to have turnaways every day. That's a sideshow man's dream."

So I called him up, introduced myself, and I said, "I'd like to have a sideshow with you." And he said, "Oh, I don't want a sideshow." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Oh, all I want is my circus."

I said, "Well, Mr. Vargas, you don't have a circus."

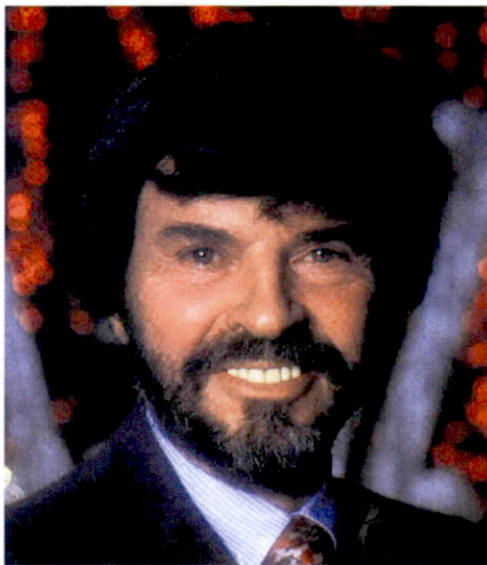
"What do you mean I don't have a circus?"

I said, "You only have part of a circus. Now if you have a sideshow then you have all the circus."

"Well, as far as I am concerned, I have all of the circus."

I said, "Well, John Ringling North wouldn't think so." And I hung up.

Now that was in the spring. And the next winter, Charlie Cox, you remember Charlie Cox. (Cox had been a partner with Sam Alexander on a sideshow with the Clyde Beatty Circus and a promoter of circuses in the Caribbean.) Charlie had a circus owner from South America—Romano Garcia, and they came up to Sarasota. We were going around buying some animals. Garcia had bought a big top from Clyde Beatty, and it was down at Leaf's Awning



Clifford Vargas

Company in Sarasota. So we had our work clothes on because we were going to spread out one of the pieces to see what condition it was in...

And I said to Romano, "You know, the fair opens today in Ft. Myers. Would you like to go down and see it?" (Garcia answered:) "Oh, I'd like to see an American fair."

Charlie Cox said, "I've got to go back to Tampa first." I said, "Why?" He said, "We've got our work clothes on. We can't go visiting looking like this."

I said, "Those damn carnies don't know who you are and wouldn't give a damn if they did. I mean, who are you going to impress? Come on."

So we went down to Ft. Myers, and by 9 o'clock that night we had seen everything we wanted to see, and I said to Romano Garcia: "Romano, tomorrow, the Vargas show—or at that time Miller and Johnson—opens

in Miami Beach. Would you like to go down there and visit that circus?"

"Oh, I'd love to; I've never seen an American circus," Garcia said. So Charlie (Cox) said, "We can't go down there. We have no dress clothes. We haven't even got a razor." (Cox was obviously a throw-back to the times when circus bosses and department heads wore suits, white shirts and ties on the lot.)

I said, "I'll buy you a 50-cent razor; we can all share it, and we'll go see Vargas." And that's what we did. And we got down there and the people were lined up to see the big show.

And all he (Vargas) has got is one concession trailer out there that they really didn't know what they were doing. And Charlie said to Vargas—I didn't have to make the opening, Charlie made it for me—he said, "Vargas. All them people standing out there. They've got money in their hands, and there's nothing to spend it on. You really need to have a sideshow."

And Vargas said, "Well, I don't think I want a sideshow, but I've been thinking about having a petting zoo."

And Charlie said, "That would be wonderful," he said. "But get just a little bigger tent so you got room for two, three stages in there, put some acts in it. And then you can make openings like a sideshow and get you a lot more money."

"Well," Vargas said, "I'll think about that."

As often happens with Vargas, he played West Palm Beach, which was the last date on the Florida tour. And he went from there, I think, to Burbank, California. Heh, heh. Typical Vargas, right?

And so business had not been too good, and by the time he got to Burbank, he was pretty broke. So he called me. "Could you bring the sideshow?"

I said, "No. Not now. I'm booked through the season." And I told him to call Sam Alexander who was right there in Los Angeles. So to make a long story short, Sam came over with a sideshow. I think he opened on Cinco de Mayo day or something, and

they were in a Mexican area of town, so Sam had a five-thousand-dollar day the first day he was there. Vargas was elated because he needed the money and he didn't know that he could get that kind of money."

(Junior Ruffin, who had just recently joined Vargas as tent master and who was listening to Hall's description, said, "I remember that.")

But Sam told him, "I can only stay for awhile because I'm booked for the season at Montreal."

And so he (Vargas) called me again. I said, "Vargas, I can't do anything now. I'm booked for the season. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll come and see you at the end of the season."

Well, at the end of the season, we closed in Dallas (at the State Fair of Texas). And Vargas opened the next day at Tulsa, Oklahoma (at the Tulsa State Fair). So we left the crew to tear down and pack up, and Chris (C.W. Christ, his partner) and I jumped on the plane and went to Tulsa.

Vargas had had a real dry spell with the show. And he was three weeks behind in making the payroll. And he said, "I'm so depressed; I have never been so depressed in my life." He didn't have a nickel.

And so, that's when I bought into the Vargas show. Not much, but a little bit, enough to give me a say-so. And not too much money because he was fund-raising, and he needed to get the show back to California. So then he said, "When can you come and bring the sideshow?" I said, "Next season."

"Well," he said, "you told me you just closed last night in Dallas."

I said, "Yes sir, that's right."

"Well, why can't you bring that show now?"

I said, "Because that show takes 16 hours to put up. That's not framed for a circus; that's a fairgrounds show."

And he said, "What are you going to bring me?" I said, "I'm going to build you a whole new show," which we did that winter. And he was going to open somewhere out in California and jump from there to Arlington, Texas, and from Arlington to Pensacola, Florida. So he said, "Are you come to California and make the opening?"

I said, "Hell no. I'm going to join you when you get to Pensacola."

And that's what I did. The side show went over there (Pensacola).



The Circus Vargas side show.

I think that was 1972. He had just changed the name of the show to Circus Vargas. And he still didn't own any equipment. He was renting the tent and seats from Harold Barnes in Miami. So I was there in 1972, 73, 74, 75.

(In May 1975, the Vargas tent suffered a blow down in Mt. Clemons, Michigan. Fortunately, no crowd was in the tent and there were no injuries. While awaiting the delivery of new canvas—fortunately already pre-ordered—Hall rejoined his partner, Chris, at their show near Chicago.)

Well, Vargas had called me and was having a "Vargasm," as we used to call it. He said, "Jim Rindlan and Sandy Rindlan (who were managing the side show) are robbing us blind. And if you don't get over here and straighten this out, I'm going to run them off."

And I said, "Don't get excited. I'll be there in the morning."

So I flew back to Detroit. And what happened, that was a lot where the people were not affluent. And so on the come-out of the circus at night, the sideshow gave a show, and Jim Rindlan made the opening and he went for "jam-them-in"—Everybody goes now at the child's price: 50 cents. Put away your dollar tickets."

And we had a good turn. But all

Vargas saw was that Rindlan was that he was selling 50-cent tickets to the adults, and he thought he was going for a buck and stealing the 50 cents.

And that was the only time we (Vargas and Hall) had one of our big arguments. And I was hot.

And so I was sitting in Jim Rindlan's house trailer. And Joe Muscarello (Vargas' manager) must have been back on the show. And so Joe came over and said, "Vargas wants to apologize. He didn't understand." So everything was OK.

So now the next day, the new big top arrived (from Leaf Tent and Awning in Sarasota). And Junior (Ruffin) was putting up this new top, and as I remember it was a solid blue color. And before that he had had an orange-and-white-striped tent.

And Vargas said to Leaf, "Here's another first in the circus business."

Leaf said, "What's that?"

"This is the first time a circus ever had a solid-color top."

And Leaf said, "What are you talking about?"

"Oh, all circuses have striped tents."

And Leaf said, "Golly almighty, I've been making tents for the Ringling show and everybody else, and I never made a striped tent for a circus."

But Vargas didn't know the difference.

(Later that year) Vargas wanted to buy me out, and I sold out to him then in Boston in October '75.

But that was a mistake on my part. I shouldn't have done it, but I had so much crap going for me at that time. And the next year I had 13 shows on the road, and one less didn't make any difference.

But that was the year (1976) Vargas went to Canada. And he had a house trailer. And they bought out like a million and a half dollars stuffed in the walls of that trailer that they didn't declare.

And so that was my connection to the Vargas show.



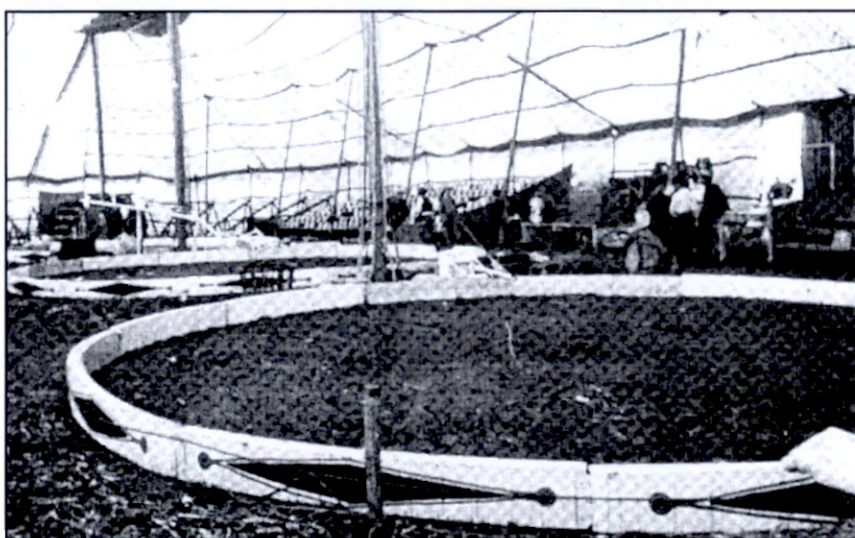
This is an odd picture showing Ira Watts with the elephant seal Goliath. I can't imagine what their connection might be.

Ira Watts was manager of Sparks Circus in 1929 and 1930. In 1931 he was told by the Ringling-Barnum ownership to cut the show to 10 cars, which he did.

In 1932 he was assistant manager of Sells-Floto. In 1933 he was assistant manager of Hagenbeck-Wallace and he held the same position on Al G. Barnes in 1934. In 1937 he was manager of Ray Marsh Brydon's Rice Bros. Circus.

In 1938 he and Charles H. Parker bought Bud Anderson's Seal Bros. show. It was enlarged to become the Parker & Watts Circus.

Watts was on the Kelly-Miller show in 1950-1951 when I was there as a candy butcher. I didn't like him at all. He was referred to as "Paddlefoot." We seat butchers had to put up the horse top (menagerie) each morning and just as we would



finish the side wall he would arrive to set up the big top connection so he could defraud the public with his "seat check" scam. More often than not we would have to take down a section of side wall and put it back up to accommodate him. I made the "Paddlefoot" crack in front of my dad one day and got a pretty good ass

chewing.

Earlier in his career Ira Watts was co-owner of the Parker and Watts Circus. This big top lay out from that show isn't bad looking at all. I think this tent is as big as you can get without having to use two rows of quarter poles, maybe 100 feet across with three 40 foot middle pieces. At right is the back door and band stand flanked by two sections of "starback" seats with small flaps that fold up and for an additional fee were available to the public. The seats in the far end of the tent are the bleachers, always called the "blues," constructed of soft pine and at left on the front side might be a chair grandstand. If so, this is where high society would sit.

The thing that impresses me the most is the number of banners hanging between the quarter poles. The show's banner man would have spent the morning soliciting the local merchants to have their businesses advertised during the performance. A veteran showman such as Watts would be good at this. They seem to have hung them completely around the tent this day.



Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART FIFTY

THE FINALE

By David W. Watt

February 23, 1920

It was the year 1878, which was the first year that the Forepaugh show went by rail, that they crossed the plains and went into winter quarters at Oakland, California, across the bay from San Francisco. After showing a few towns in California, they came east and it was shortly after their return that owners of the Barnum show could see the handwriting on the wall that there was a dangerous rival in the field and immediately commenced to block Forepaugh's show in every conceivable way. But if there was any one thing that Adam Forepaugh was, it was a fighter. In this business, he was after the last penny, but to fight for supremacy he would give up his money willingly and forget it.

This was before my time with the Forepaugh show, and yet when I joined the show in '82, the fight was still on harder than ever, and in the eyes of the Barnum people, everybody connected with the Forepaugh show was not to be tolerated with their show for a minute. I might say that the same feeling existed with the Forepaugh show.

Gets Madison Square Garden

Madison Square Garden, New York City, at that time was controlled by the Vanderbilt estate. Mr. Forepaugh sent a confidential man to the agent of the building saying that any time that the Barnum show felt as though



Courier issued for the combined Barnum and Forpaugh show in Madison Square Garden. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

the rent was too much, or if he had any misunderstanding with them, that he would be glad to rent the

place at the old price of \$20,000 for eight weeks. It was along in September, 1886, that Mr. Forepaugh received a telegram from the agent stating that he could have the Garden for the coming spring, opening March 6, for \$20,000. Adam Forepaugh immediately answered that he would take it and sent a certified check for the money at once.

The news soon got out that the Forepaugh show had leased the building for the coming season and it was then that the Barnum agents got busy and even went so far as to get an architect to draw plans for a new building and claimed they had leased a large tract of land on which they would erect a building; had a cut in the New York papers showing the size of the building and the write-up said that it would be completed by March 1 and it would be a permanent home for the Barnum show for all time to come. But this did not disturb Mr.

Forepaugh, for he well knew that this project would run into millions of dollars which, at that time, they could not control.

Bluff Did Not Work

So it went on and every day an article would be published in the New York papers giving the description of the great building and how they would soon be at work. But this bluff did not work, and along in the fall an agent of the Barnum show came over to Philadelphia and told Mr. Forepaugh that he thought the coming spring it would be a good idea for the two shows to open up there in conjunction. Each, he suggested, could pay half the expenses and after that divide 50-50. But the old showman simply shook his head and said that Barnum had never made that kind of an offer to him before. After scratching his head for a minute, he said that the only way he would consider both shows to open together would be for Barnum to pay the rent, be at the expense of tearing out the old seats and putting in such as would be necessary and again in the same order. The agent said that there was nothing doing there and that they might as well stop talking at once, which they did.

They said nothing doing when he made his report back to New York.

Forepaugh Was Through

Yet at times, for several weeks they tried to make a better deal, but Mr. Forepaugh said nothing doing and that his terms had already been given. They finally accepted it, for well they knew that by giving the Madison Square Garden to Forepaugh would weaken their show both for supremacy in the business and also financially.

I went on a week before the time for the show to open and found on the Fourth Avenue side of the building four little ticket offices with peep-holes about a foot square which they had always used. After I showed them to Mr. Forepaugh, I said that I would much rather cut a big opening on one side with a door to raise up, the same as in a wagon, to accept this arrangement. He said that I should get a carpenter and have him fix the office to suit me. He said that he thought my plan was a good one.

"Now, Dave," he said, "I want you



Adam Forepaugh

to be here every minute during business times, for as soon as the show opens after the first day, I am going back to Philadelphia and stay there, for I know that if I mix up with these Barnum people there will be trouble."

Arrested for Counterfeiting

After the first day, he returned to his home and it was only a few days later until they tried to put up a job on me and had me arrested for passing counterfeit money. That was about 9 o'clock in the evening, just in

Another courier for the combined shows.



time for all the New York and Philadelphia papers to come out with big scare headlines that Adam Forepaugh's ticket agent had been arrested for passing counterfeit money. As the men who arrested me were government men from Washington, I sent for Robert Pinkerton, head of the Pinkerton agency. Before midnight they had counted every dollar that I had in the office. One of these detectives on leaving the office pinched me on the arm and whispered that he believed the money that I was supposed to have taken was good enough for a contribution box.

But someone, unbeknownst to me, telegraphed Mr. Forepaugh at Philadelphia, and before 6 o'clock in the morning, I was called out of bed by a messenger boy who handed me a telegram saying, "Hold the fort at any cost. Shall I come on? Answer." I answered, "Don't worry; everything is all right." It was only a bluff put up by Jim Hutchinson, one of the partners in the Barnum show. Three years after the country was divided, one show to take the east and the other the west, which they did. Then all trouble was supposed to be settled yet the fire of hatred still burned on both sides. This closed the incident of the two shows going 50-50 and paying all the freight.

February 28, 1920

A few days ago a man asked me how it was with the wagon show that at all times of night everyone was lined up ready to start for the next town. The first work I had to do after arriving in a town was to register the people at the hotel, assign them to their rooms and at the bottom of the page on the register, I would write, "Drive tonight is 25 miles, breakfast on the lot at 1 o'clock and at the hotel at 2:30 o'clock." A night watchman would call everyone on the lot at 1 o'clock and in the hotel at 2:30 o'clock. It behooved me to be up and dressing when the call came for he was not allowed to call but once.

Had Charge of Trunks

The night watchman also had charge of the trunk wagon and people in the hotels were allowed their trunks twice a week and, of course, in the dressing room every day.

While the watchman received salary, he was also allowed to charge the people at the hotel 50 cents a week for handling their trunks. While he was only allowed to call the people once, I never knew of anyone getting left. On the lot they had 30 minutes for breakfast and 45 minutes after they were called at the hotel, they must be out and ready to start for the next town.

Showing Out in Kansas

We were showing in a town out in Kansas and after the afternoon show, a farmer who had quite a family said to me that he believed we would pass his place on our way to Abilene which our next stand. When I asked him where he lived, he told me that it was about eight miles on a straight road. His family of children commenced to dance around him as he said that they would be up to see the show go by, but as it was a long drive and we had to pack up and breakfast as soon as the show was out in the evening, I told them that if they wanted to see the show go by, they'd better stay up as the first wagons would commence to pass there by 10 o'clock or shortly after.

Had Bonfire in Front Yard

A young man some 14 or 15 years old said that we would know when we got to his house for they would have a bonfire in the front yard. The cook tent and the baggage wagons were always the first ones into the next town, and I was the last one out of a town, having to wait and settle the bills. I also had to pass the other wagons and be the first one into the next town. I stopped a minute at this farm house that night and the young man said that I had made a pretty good guess for it was just five minutes to ten when the first wagons passed.

In those early days the Burr Robbins show was some sight for the inhabitants for it was the first circus to invade that part of the country and many times we were from 40 to 75 miles away from railroads. I doubt if there was ever a wagon show that had a better system in all departments than did this one.

Hears Story of Old Driver

The following story of the fate of an

old driver whom I knew well 25 years ago was sent to me few days ago. It tells the story of old Joe Campbell, whom I don't believe ever intended to harm anyone: "Old Joe Campbell has heard the call each spring for the past five years, and each time the hope that some fortunate turn of fate would restore him to his beloved white tops has burned in his breast, only to be shattered. Disappointed, disheartened, but still with a pitifully simple faith that some time the justice of his plea would prevail, he has turned back to his drab prison existence. And now a rift has appeared in the clouds.

"For 40 years Joe Campbell drove teams in the big circuses--Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros. Forepaugh-Sells and others. Many old troupers know him well. Five years ago in Philadelphia, he had a quarrel with his roommate and in defending himself, pushed the man, who fell down a stairway and sustained injuries from which he died. The old circus driver was sentenced to twelve years in the Eastern Penitentiary. He has served five years. Warden McKenty says Campbell has been a model prisoner and he believes his story that killing for which he was sentenced was accidental and that Campbell should be paroled. As a result of the activity of the Philadelphia representative of the *Billboard*, Campbell, with the approval of the warden, wrote to the *Billboard*, appealing to his old friends in the show business to assist him in obtaining a parole. He is confident his letter will bring him a job without which he could not obtain his release. 'I spent 40 years as a driver,' he says, 'and I want to do the job again and to see the kiddies at the show grounds.'

"Are we going to see 'Old Joe's' hopes shattered again? He is 66, his hair is silver and his face bears the marks of suffering. But if you could see the way his kindly face lights up with hope at the prospect of getting back to his horses and the white tops. Old Joe wants a job! He must have one!

"We're waiting for your answer!"

Prohibition Works Wonders

Prohibition has worked wonders in the freak and museum business

here, as it has created a vacancy of some of the choice locations on the main thoroughfares. Several enterprising managers saw the opportunity of renting these buildings and once more revive the museum of old, with its collection of freaks and curiosities. At the corner of St. Charles and Poydras Streets Rinaldi's Wax Museum holds forth in a large building, once a saloon of prominence. At 305 St. Charles Street, one of the best locations here, Frank Taylor opened up in the building once occupied by the Deluxe saloon, and as this was one of those palatial palaces of thirst, with marble bar and magnificent plate glass mirrors, which were stationery and could not be moved. Mr. Taylor solved the problem by erecting the stages directly over the bar. Can you imagine the sight that this presents to the patrons, who walk into one of these former home camps and plant their feet upon the brass rail and look at the freaks, who are exhibited on the bar, with a magnificent mirror background?

There sits the fat woman and the armless girl with their peculiarities exhibited a thousand fold with the reflecting lights and brightly polished glass and mahogany. Where once the cash register reposed sits the man-woman looking down at the curiosity seekers as much as to say, "What will you have?" One thing particularly noticeable and that is the unexpected patronage of ladies who had never been in a barroom. How they look with astonishment upon the magnificent surroundings and for the first time in their lives see what the inside of a barroom is like! One inebriated individual wandered into the museum and was just drunk enough to think he was in a real saloon. He walked around in a half-dazed condition, trying to get someone to serve him a drink. He finally became disgusted at being ignored and ambled out of the swinging doors, remarking to the ticket taker. "That Lala Coolah may be a good bartender, but what they want with a gal without any apron back of that bar is more than I can understand."

Nevertheless, some use has been found for vacant saloons, and prohibition has put many a performer and curio-hall novelty to work this win-

ter, who otherwise would live had to remain idle for want of a suitable place to exhibit.

New Orleans is one of the best show towns in the south, and now that Con T. Kennedy has put it on the map as a winter quarters, Kansas City had better look to her laurels. Besides, the climate is ideal for outdoor showmen, as many carnivals have kept going all winter and February finds many of the larger tented shows opening their season.

March 10, 1920

It was in the spring of '84 that Adam Forepaugh brought over from Europe many performers, and among them was a young woman by the name of Lilly Deacon, who brought with her four high jumping horses and one beautiful large white horse, also one of the best trained ones that I have ever seen, for which it was said she paid \$10,000. It was along toward the middle of the season that Adam Forepaugh, Jr., and Miss Lilly Deacon were married, and everything seemed to go nicely for a year or two. Then there was an estrangement between them and Miss Lilly Deacon Forepaugh left the show, taking her fine horses with her and joined the Barnum & Bailey show.

Show Has Serious Accident

While Mrs. Forepaugh corresponded with her husband and others with the show she never came back to the show again as one of the performers. It was in 1889 that the Barnum & Bailey show gave an afternoon performance in a town not far from Watertown, New York and were to open in Montreal, Canada, the following day for a two days' engagement. It was on that night while on a fast run that one of the worst accidents ever known in the show business up to that time occurred.

Although no human lives were lost, the pile-up was one of the worst in the history of what is now the St. Lawrence division of the Central.

The show was traveling in three sections, running about ten minutes apart, the first with the tents, wagons and equipment; the second with the livestock, and the third with the coaches and sleepers carrying the personnel of the big aggregation. It was the second section which was wrecked.



The Barnum & Bailey train wreck in Potsdam, New York.

Axle Let Go on Curve

Curving out of a cut, then as now, on a slight downgrade, the railroad swept across the meadow of the farm then owned by Silas S. Clark from which the crossing got the name it still holds. The circus specials had passed through Potsdam about 9 and the first made the run to Norwood without untoward incident. As the second section was swinging down the grade near the crossing, an axle on the elephant car let go. The broken end dragged over the ties until it struck the crossing planks, where the ponderous car toppled and the pile-up began. Six cars were smashed into kindling wood, the engine and three cars behind it being the only ones to get over the crossing in safety. Fortunately in these were the carnivorous beasts.

Pandemonium broke loose on the Clark meadows. The neighing and groans of the horses, mingled with the shrill trumpeting of the elephants and the roar of the lions and tigers. Most of the wrecked cars contained horses, and those not killed outright were imprisoned. A carload of camels was in the midst of the wreck. A car truck driven into their car killed two outright.

Brakeman Gives Warning

A brakeman, riding in the caboose at the rear of the train, bethought himself of the following section and seizing his red lantern he sped back up the track around the curve and brought the train to a halt with the nose of the locomotive almost into the mass of tangled wood and metal ahead. J. A. Bailey himself was aboard the last section. Under his direction all hands turned out. Bonfires were built and by their light the entire circus force went to work

to release the animals pinned down by the wreck and to put an end to the sufferings of those for whom there was no hope. Ringmasters, tentmen, clowns--even the equestriennes lent a hand from--Bailey down to the most humble roustabout joined in the work.

Great Scene in Meadow

Probably the north country has never witnessed just such a scene as was enacted on the Clark meadow that night. Mahouts, urging their elephants, almost frantic with fear, through portals chopped in the mass of wreckage; Bedouins and Arabs in their turbans working frantically to free the thoroughbred Arabian horses which in the struggle were trampling each other with the wrecked stock cars; South American llamas tugging at their tethers in the fence corners; zebras wending their way to the farm barn to the consternation of the dairy herd quartered therein; overall the flickering light from the bonfires and lanterns; and the incessant hubbub of sound from the animals mingled with the staccato reports of the choppers and the occasional crack of a revolver putting an end to an animal mortally injured.

28 Horses Dead

When daylight broke, 28 horses, two camels and a trick mule lay dead on the meadow. Included with them was the ten thousand dollar Arabian stallion "Abdullah," the property of Mrs. Adam Forepaugh, Jr. Witnesses to the wreck recall the grief of Mrs. Forepaugh as she stood beside the body of the horse where it lay near the right of way. The animals were buried in an eight foot trench, one hundred feet long.

It was about four in the morning when the wrecking crew pulled up at Clark's Crossing. Steam cranes had not yet come into use and to remove the wrecked cars it was necessary to pull with block and tackle attached to locomotives--a slow and tiresome process. B. F. Batchelder, boss of the wrecking crew, whose death occurred here a few years ago, was wont to

relate how two ex-sailors, members of the wrecking crew, saved hours in the clearing of the wreck through their ability at rope tying on the wrecking cables.

Elephants Were Used

It was characteristic of Batchelder to make use of whatever tools came his way, and on first sight of the herd of elephants beside the track it occurred to him that here were locomotives without rails. He sought out Bailey and got permission to use the elephants in clearing up the wrecked cars. Soon the crowd, by this time numbering several thousand, were treated to the novel sight of the huge pachyderms shoving and tugging in an effort to open up the road. Never before had such a novel method of railroad wrecking been tried in New York State, nor has it been again, so far as is known. The line was cleared and the track relaid late in the afternoon.

The loss to the circus was \$40,000 in stock and equipment with a potential loss of \$18,000 more from gate receipts at the Montreal performances which had to be canceled. It was to Batchelder that the railroad was indebted for absolute proof that it was not liable for this amount. One of the first acts of the railroad man was to trace the furrow left by the broken axle of the elephant car from the curve to the crossing where the accident occurred. The circus owned its own cars, and could not recover for damage caused by the breaking of its own property.

Janesville City Times

July 27, 1889

THE CIRCUS ROUND-UP

Eleven Thousand People Under the Forepaugh Circus

A VERY GOOD EXHIBITION

The Police Harvest - No Robberies or Disorderly Conduct to Report

About three thousand people attended the exhibition of the Forepaugh show last evening, the performance being similar to that of the afternoon. The exhibition was good, some portions excellent, very clever work being done by several of the performers. Some of the acts were open to considerable severe criticism, yet as a whole, to one not wanting the earth for half a dollar,

the performance was first class and gave perfect satisfaction.

Hundreds lingered around the tenting grounds to see the "pick up" of the show and its move to the cars, which was a "free show" in itself, all working with clock-like regularity. The streets were full of people until a late hour to view the procession of heavy wagons on their way to the cars, bound for Rockford, at which place the show exhibits today.

"Yes, we had fully eleven thousand people under the canvas at the afternoon and evening performance yesterday," said D. W. Watt (sic), treasurer of the Forepaugh combination, this morning, to a *Gazette* reporter as he was making his way to the depot preparatory to going to Rockford. "It was the largest crowd of people we have had in the state outside of Milwaukee. There were between seven and eight thousand people present at the afternoon performance and about three thousand in the evening. We had a big crowd at Waukesha on Thursday, but I think Janesville takes the prize. Yes, the 'old man' (meaning the elder Forepaugh), is well pleased with the attendance and you may rest assured that if the show comes west next season, Janesville will be on the route. Goodbye, I may come up and spend Sunday with my family," and so saying, Mr. Watt hurried for the depot to catch the Rockford train.

"We captured and lodged in jail yesterday thirteen tough looking and suspicious individuals; no general charges will be made against them," said Marshal Hogan this morning. "I have not heard of any pocket picking or burglaries, and I think if there had been any, I should have known it by this time. We had five extra men on the force yesterday and were around all the time and did not give parties an opportunity to work their games. I caught one fellow up on the grounds just as his was commencing to work his game and took him down to the

jail. I then told the crowd that if they were swindled out of their money to report to me and I would see that they got it back. This had its effect and no further attempts were made as I can learn. I have turned some of those I arrested out to let them get out of town. The others will be given a chance to get out of town this evening. I think the city has been extremely fortunate. The town full of strangers and no complaints made." And the marshal turned to discuss with Health Officer Palmer the question of authority in burying a dead horse which had been shot inside of the city limits, the city having no 'bone yard' for such carcasses.

Janesville Daily Gazette

August 13, 1885

The Minneapolis *Tribune* of recent date in reporting Forepaugh's circus, concludes the article with the following flattering personal notice of Mr. D. W. Watt which will be appreciated by that gentleman's many friends in Janesville. "But as interesting a sight as any was the performance of the ticket seller. Mr. D. W. Watt is his name and his home is at Janesville, Wisconsin. He can sell fully as many tickets in an hour as his predecessor,

Mr. Ben Lusbie, the 'lightning ticket seller,' who could sell 6,000 tickets in one hour and never make a mistake.

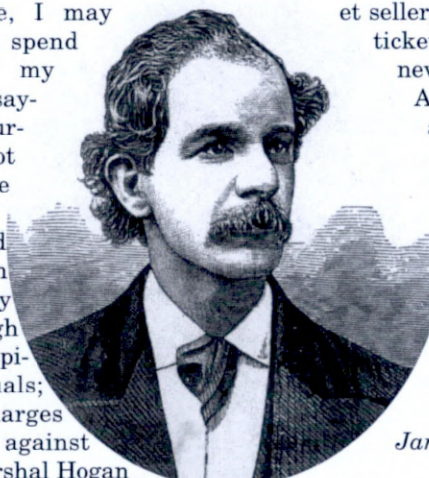
An unusually quick eye and nimble fingers are necessary for this kind of business, and it is claimed that there is not a bank teller in the United States that could fill such a position."

Ben Lusbie.

Janesville Daily Gazette

May 21, 1886

Mr. D. W. Watt, who is now out with Forepaugh's show, recently received a present from one of the performers that he values very highly. It is a meerschaum cigar holder, on top of which stands a ticket wagon beautifully carved and an exact facsimile in miniature of the one belonging to the show. A crowd is pushing and struggling around the open window where David himself is seen sell-



ing tickets, and on the roof of the wagon sits a policeman watching to see that no pickpockets get into the crowd. The holder is a remarkable piece of carving and is well worth examining. It is now at Chase's cigar store, where Mr. Watt allowed it to be placed on exhibition for a few days.

The New York Clipper
October 10, 1885
Forepaugh Chat

Two weeks from Oct. 3 the Forepaugh show closes season at St. Charles, Mo., twenty-seven miles from St. Louis. Already the breaking-up day is almost the sole topic of conversation about the show. Those of the boys who have saved their "stuff" are apparently holding it with a firmer grasp than ever, while those who have failed to practice economic principles are hustling with more than their usual zeal after the cartwheel of our fathers. On the whole, however, the boys are pretty well provided with goods available in this world and as a natural sequence, a big fall boom can be expected in the clothing and jewelry line.... "

A classic Forepaugh lithograph. From Internet.

"The Governor" has stood the siege of a long and peculiarly arduous season with surprising ease. He is looking more vigorous now than he has for several years past. He continues to amuse himself with "hoss trades." Business in Kansas the past three weeks has been something to brag of. Notwithstanding the almost total loss of the wheat crop, the rural contingent attended the show nearly en masse. For good, reliable, plain every-day circus goers, give me the amiable Kansan. "Dave" Watt, our usually complacent and volatile ticket juggler, is still troubled with melancholy occasioned by

his giving a beggar a five dollar gold coin in mistake for a nickel.

The New York Clipper
July 17, 1886

Fast Ticket Selling--In view of the recent statements as to "queer" ticket selling and mistakes in change, the following from an official of the Forepaugh show is of interest: "In the *Clipper* of July 10, I noticed a statement in regard to our ticket seller-- that warrants were issued for his arrest for swindling people by giving short change. In the same article you say: 'Let us hope there is no foundation for the charge.' In justice to David Watt (our worthy ticket seller) please give a plain statement in regard to the matter. The report arose from an article published in



The Bridgeport Times of June 4, which stated that the public was being imposed upon by our ticket sellers, who receive more than the price charged for tickets. The writer stated that \$1 was made on fifteen tickets and that our ticket sellers pay a bonus for the privilege of selling. This was observed by the gentleman at the downtown office where tickets are sold at the slight advance which has been the custom for years and is observed at the present time. This statement was, of course, good for all croakers, who are always looking for something detrimental to the welfare of the circus. Now for facts. David Watt has held his position with us four years and during that time, not one charge has been made against him for dishonesty or uncivil treatment, nor has a warrant ever been issued for his arrest. Mr. Watt is prepared to give \$500 to any honest man that will make a statement that he ever received short change from the ticket wagon of the Forepaugh show during the time he (Watt) has been employed as ticket seller."

The New York Clipper
September 25, 1886

It occurred in Buffalo, N. Y. Frank Morris did the presentation talking and this inscription on the gold badge tells the story: "Our ticket seller--Presented to Dave Watt by his many friends of the Forepaugh show, as a mark of their esteem. Sept. 13, 1886." The gift consists of a polished revolving disk, surrounded by a broad chased band of gold, surmounted by two carved miniature horses in gold. On the obverse side is: "The champion ticket seller of the world."

The New York Clipper
October 30, 1886

An elegant medal is on exhibition at one of the jewelry stores in Janesville, Wis. It was sent home by Dave W. Watt, Forepaugh's treasurer, having been presented to him on Sept. 13 in Buffalo, N.Y., by his many friends in the Forepaugh aggregation.

The New York Clipper
October 20, 1888

Janesville--Sol Smith Russell has prospects of a large house Oct. 13. W. J. Scanlan had a house full. McNish, Ramza & Arno's Minstrels had a small house. Dave W. Watt, Forepaugh's ticket seller, is home.

The New York Clipper
August 3, 1889

Janesville--At Lappin's Opera House, Hettie Bernard-Chase comes Aug. 2. The Forepaugh show had a perfect day and big business afternoon and evening on July 26. Ticket seller Dave Watt entertained the Forepaugh people at his own home while in this city.

The New York Clipper
February 15, 1913

D. W. Watt

In 1878, D. W. Watt joined the Burr Robbins circus as treasurer and ticket agent and remained with that organization until the spring of 1882, when he joined the Adam Forepaugh show, in charge of the finances. In 1883 he returned to the Burr Robbins show as manager for one season and then went back to Adam Forepaugh and remained with him until his death, Jan. 24, 1890. Mr.

Watt continued that season as manager of the Forepaugh show taken out under the direction of Cooper & McCaddon and then retired to take up the real estate business in Janesville, Wis., where he now resides. Mr. Watt was known as 'Handsome Dave,' and he has a world of friends in all branches of the show business. In his day, Watt was considered the lightning circus ticket seller of the world. He was held in very high esteem by the members of the Forepaugh family, and not a year passes but what he receives some token of their lasting friendship.

The New York Clipper
April 25, 1914

David D. Watt was a welcome caller at the Western Bureau of The New York *Clipper* in Chicago, Friday, 17. He came down from Janesville, Wis., to spend a few hours with Al and Charles Ringling and to renew acquaintances with the World's Greatest Shows. Dave is looking fine and is the same genial gentleman he always has been.

Janesville Daily Gazette
April 26, 1928

"Dave" Watt, One of Oldest Circus Men in Country Will be 78 on Tuesday

Tuesday, April 24, marked the 78th birthday of one of the best known men in Janesville, a man who has friends all over the United States, who has been in every state and in most of the important cities and many that are little known to most people. That man is D. W. Watt, usually called "Dave," who is former manager of the Burr Robbins circus and former treasurer of the Adam Forepaugh circus.

For 30 years Mr. Watt pulled out with the circus every spring and traveled first by wagon and later by rail to a new town every day. It is hardly possible to mention a town about which he cannot tell a story or a circus man or woman whom he does not know.

Mr. Watt was born in Green County in 1850 and came to Janesville when he was 18.

"It was in August 1860 that I came to Janesville to work in a dry goods store belonging to R. L. Colvin," he says. "If grass ever grew any greener

than I was, I have never seen it. For a year and a half I worked there and then I decided to try my luck in Chicago. After the big fire, I came back again and worked in another dry goods store.



Burr Robbins

Joined Circus in 1878

"It was in the spring of 1878 that I first became interested in following the circus," Mr. Watt explained. "The Burr Robbins circus wintered near Janesville then and I signed up as ticket seller at \$10 per week. My first trip was from here to Delavan in the pouring rain. That summer we did Kansas and Nebraska. After the show in the evening we had to pull out and travel to the next town, sometimes 40 miles away. I remember one night that we covered 52 miles.

"Sometimes I have been asked which was the hardest year I ever knew in the circus. Though I cannot recall any easy ones, I believe 1880 was the hardest of them all. It was that year I became manager for the Burr Robbins show and there were so many things to look after. In some ways, it was harder to manage a small circus than it is to manage a large one now. I had to see that the show started out from one town on time at night and that the last wagon was on the lot in time the next morning. Many times I would not get more than three or four hours sleep. Now

there is a man at the head of each department and traveling by rail makes it easier.

"In 1880 it took 160 horses to transport our show and then everyone excepting the working people stopped at hotels. I had to get rooms for from 55 to 60 people and in many of the smaller towns, this was almost an impossible job.

Goes with Forepaugh

"Two years of that was enough. I joined the Adam Forepaugh circus as treasurer and ticket seller.

"Adam Forepaugh, Jr. was the greatest animal trainer in the world," Mrs. Watt says, "I was with them for a good many years and I have seen young Adam go among the elephants at feeding time and holler 'Salute!' and every one of them would stand up on his hind legs and wave a trunk. He trained the John L. Sullivan boxing elephants. He did it by brute force. There is no

other way.

"While I was with the Adam Forepaugh show, for an hour in the afternoon and an hour in the evening, I was pretty busy, but most of the rest of the time I was under no strain. Sometimes in the big cities I had to sell all day. I paid all the bills which included the salaries of 700 people twice a week. You can see that I was always busy, but then the rest of them were too. I can recollect of no easy job in the circus and I know all about it from the ticket wagon to the dressing room.

Worked with Celebrities

"In days gone by the two big shows of the country were the P. T. Barnum outfit and the Adam Forepaugh show. In the season of '87 they combined for a nine weeks' opening at Madison Square Garden in New York. It was a great event in the circus world and I was treasurer for the combined show. Between us we had most of the great people of the ring. Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley, the world's greatest rifle shot, were both in the troupe. One night after the show I went to a French restaurant with them across the street. When we came out of the place there was a group of a dozen

tramps waiting to ask Buffalo Bill for a quarter. They knew that he would give them each at least a dollar."

The two great circuses, Barnum's and Forepaugh's, competed for years. Then old Adam Forepaugh died and the circus was sold to Barnum. Mr. Watt stayed with it for one year and then came back to Janesville. One of his eyes was starting to bother him then and since he has lost the use of both of them.

For a while after he came back to Janesville, he was in the real estate business. He reports that he sold three pieces of property when he could not see well enough to find them alone.

Wrote Interesting Articles

Everyone in Janesville remembers the Saturday stories that Mr. Watt used to write for the *Gazette* between 1914 and 1919. His headline was "Side Lights on the Circus." Sometimes he wrote of the days when he was on the road, sometimes about the Showmen's League of America of which he was a member, and other weeks about the lives of the people in the business and the friends that he made. Every story showed an intimate knowledge of the folks of the circus world.

Whenever circus men come to Janesville, they look up David Watt and talk over the days when he was on the road. He knew all of the seven Ringling brothers and when the Ringling theater was dedicated at Baraboo, he was one of the guests of honor.

Mr. and Mrs. Watt have an apartment in the Myers Hotel and every afternoon he goes into the hotel lobby or to some other place where he can talk to his friends. He can see nothing now, but he says that people are most kind about helping him across the street.

Married 56 Years

On Jan. 3, Mr. and Mrs. Watt celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary. They have one son who is living. His name is Bert and he comes from his home in Chicago to see his parents at frequent intervals. Mrs. Watt was never on the road with her husband, but she used to plan on being

in all the larger towns when they were showing there. She was in New York when the circus ran for nine weeks at Madison Square Garden.

Mr. Watt is not a man who tells the same stories over and over again. His experience was so wide that is not necessary. Mrs. Watt says that sometimes when some town happens to be mentioned in the newspaper, it will recall some story that she has never heard before. His education is the education of experience and the foundation is deep.

Janesville Daily Gazette

January 28, 1929

David W. Watt, 79, Circus Veteran Dies: Was One of Best Known Men in City

One of the few outstanding showmen of the circus as America knew it 40 to 50 years ago, and one of the best known and most beloved citizens of Janesville and Rock County, David W. Watt, 79, intimate friend of the late P. T. Barnum, the Ringling brothers and other nationally known figures of "the big top" died at 6 am. Sunday in his apartment in the Myers Hotel building. Death occurred less than a month after he and his wife had observed their 57th wedding anniversary.

Funeral is Tuesday

The funeral will be held at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Kimball funeral home, 158 South Jackson Street and burial will be in Fassett Cemetery, Edgerton.

The active pallbearers will be: Frank L. Smith, Joseph M. Connors, H. V. Allen, Robert M. Bostwick, William McNeil and John Soulman.

Honorary pallbearers will be: John G. Rexford, V. P. Richardson, F. L. Clemons, H. H. Bliss, Thomas McKeigue and Dr. F. B. Farnsworth.

Mr. Watt has long been a contributor to the *Gazette* and after he became blind dictated his reminiscences to a stenographer.

Although Mr. Watt had been in failing health for several years, up to a few months ago he still was able to leave his apartment daily to visit with his friends in the Myers Hotel and other places and always maintained a cheerful attitude. Though

almost totally blind in the last years of his life, he never complained and was more concerned in the good or bad fortune of others than his own.

Out of his rich experience and wide travel, he had accumulated a wealth of knowledge and stories which made him a brilliant conversationalist. His witty and often public remarks made him sought after by his many friends. On account of his blindness, he was unable to visit among friends to as great extent as he would have liked, but he was seldom alone. The last years of his life he was a familiar figure about the Myers Hotel lobby and was widely known in the city.

He never lacked guidance in getting about the streets, his many friends always leading him by the arm to the places he wanted to go. Though this aid was a daily matter, he never became any less appreciative and invariably there was a cheery "thank you." A few years ago he was overjoyed when an operation successfully restored his sight, but the cure lasted but a short time.

Wrote "Circus Side Lights"

Mr. Watt attained, wide acquaintance in this section of the state following his retirement from the circus life by a series of articles, "Side Lights on the Circus Business," written for the *Gazette*. They were published over a period of five years, starting in 1914 [1912]. Spending

P. T. Barnum





William F. Cody

practically his entire life among circus folk, he was nationally known among them and with every show that came here since his retirement he was reunited with old acquaintances.

For 30 years, Mr. Watt, affectionately known as "Dave," traveled with various circuses, for some time serving as manager of the old Burr Robbins organization, Janesville's own contribution to the amusement business.

Born in Ohio

He was born April 24, 1849 in Steubenville, Ohio and would have been 80 years old this spring. The family left Ohio and moved to Juda when Mr. Watt was a child. He came to Janesville in August 1868 when a boy of 19 and was employed by Colvin & Farnsworth, proprietors of a dry goods store here.

Here he remained for a year and a half and then went to Chicago to work. After the big fire there, he came back here and found employment in another dry goods store.

It was before the days of railroads and easy traveling that he joined his first circus and often recalled to friends his travels by wagon from town to town. In the spring of 1878 he signed up with the Burr Robbins circus which had winter quarters here as a ticket seller. His wages were fixed at \$10 per week. His first trip, made in a heavy rain storm, was from here to Delavan. The show that

year toured Nebraska and Kansas.

The life was full of hardships, with hauls during the night often being as much as 40 miles.

Managed Burr Robbins Circus

He became manager of the Burr Robbins circus in 1880, and put in his hardest years in getting the organization from town to town on schedule before the days of rail transportation. Three to four hours sleep per night was a good average, as it was necessary for him to see the last wagon out at night and the first wagon in at the next town in the morning. In that year, 160 horses were required to transport the Burr Robbins outfit from town to town. Besides managing the show, it was necessary for Mr. Watt to arrange rooms for about 60 members of the company, no small task in the smaller towns of 40 years ago.

Treasurer for Forepaugh

After two years as head of the Robbins circus, he joined the Adam Forepaugh circus as treasurer and ticket seller, a place in which he served for many years. Here the life was somewhat easier, though he sold tickets daily, paid all the bills and made out the payroll for 700 persons twice a week.

It was during his association with this circus that Mr. Watt became acquainted with Adam Forepaugh, Jr., considered by him the greatest animal trainer in the world. The two big shows in those years were the Forepaugh circus and P. T. Barnum's outfit. In 1887 the combined for a nine-week appearance in Madison Square Garden in New York. Here he became intimate with Barnum, the great showman, and served as treasurer of the combined organization during its stay there. He was also a friend of all of the seven Ringling brothers.

Knew Old Stars

One of his favorite recollections was in his associations with Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley, famous woman rifle shot, both of whom were with the organization. Dozens of others of stars of the circus world were among his friends. After the death of Forepaugh, the show was sold to Barnum and Mr. Watt remained with



Annie Oakley

it for a year before returning to Janesville. Already one of his eyes had started to trouble him.

Following his return here, he became a real estate agent and continued to work until he became almost totally blind. He often recalled selling three pieces of property after he became so blind that he was unable to find them alone.

For the past several years, Mr. and Mrs. Watt made their home in the Myers Hotel. They were married Jan. 3, 1872. Mrs. Watt, who survives, was formerly Miss Josephine Dearborn of Janesville. One son, Burt, survives.

In addition Mr. Watt leaves two sisters, Mrs. H. H. Noggle, Hampton, Iowa and Mrs. George Ross, Sac City, Iowa; two brothers, Quigley B. Watt, Iowa Falls, Iowa and George F. Watt, Hawarden, Iowa; and a granddaughter, Miss Bernice Watt, Daytona Beach, Florida. A second son, William W. Watt, died 12 years ago.

The Billboard

February 9, 1929

Watt-David W. 79, circus veteran, died at Janesville, Wis., January 27 and was buried in Edgerton January 29. He was almost totally blind in the last years of his life. Watt was well known in the show business 40 to 50 years ago. At one time he managed the Burr Robbins circus. After two years as head of this show, he joined the Adam Forepaugh circus as treasurer and ticket seller where he served for many years. He is survived by his widow, two sisters and two brothers.



**BUFFALO BILL'S
WILD WEST**



**AND CONGRESS OF
ROUGH RIDERS
OF THE WORLD**

COPYRIGHT 1898
BY J. ARUDOLF